

GAMBIT

CHESS EXPLAINED

THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

James Rizzitano

A new approach to understanding the chess openings



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Chess Explained: The Queen's Gambit Declined

James Rizzitano

GAMBIT

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
corr.	correspondence game
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(D)	see next diagram

Dedication

To Jillian and Jay.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to David Vigorito for his strong opinions. Special thanks to my wife Kim and to our children Jillian and Jay for their enthusiasm and support.

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Introduction

I welcome the opportunity to write another book for Gambit's *Chess Explained* series. The goal of this book is to examine the Queen's Gambit Declined (QGD) and to explain the typical plans and strategies for each side within the context of 25 high-level annotated games. Most of the World Champions have played both sides of the QGD; the 10th World Champion Boris Spassky and the 12th World Champion Anatoly Karpov have been especially notable defenders of Black's cause. The QGD has played a prominent role in world championship matches and high-level tournaments for more than a century.

Black's strategy in the QGD is to occupy the centre with pawns and fight for his share of the board in accordance with classical development principles. During the early part of the 20th century, the Hypermoderns led by Aron Nimzowitsch and Richard Réti showed that Black could also contest the centre not through direct occupation, but with pieces controlling the centre from the wings. This has relevance for the contemporary club and tournament player because one of the most important factors to consider when selecting an opening is to assess your comfort level regarding the three chess elements of time, material and space. Your personal preferences and tendencies should help determine your choice of opening. Let's consider the element of space in the context of choosing a black defence to 1 d4. If you are uncomfortable conceding a space advantage to your opponent in the opening, consider classical openings including the Queen's Gambit Declined, Queen's Gambit Accepted, Slav or Semi-Slav.

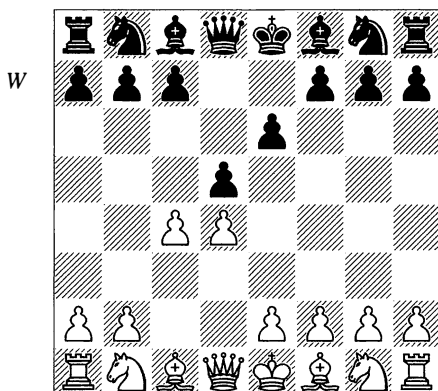
If you prefer to play solid chess and stand your ground in the centre, the QGD is one of the openings you should consider adding to your repertoire. A general understanding of characteristic QGD positions and motifs is beneficial for practitioners of many double queen's pawn openings including the Queen's Gambit Accepted, the Slav and the Semi-Slav complex. QGD themes also occur in other light-square openings including certain variations of the Nimzo-Indian, Bogó-Indian and Queen's Indian.

Let's examine Black's strategy and explore the lines we shall be covering:

1 d4 d5 2 c4

White's 2nd move alternatives and a repertoire for Black are covered in my book *How to Beat 1 d4*.

2...e6 (D)



Black supports his d5-pawn and opens the f8-a3 diagonal for his dark-squared bishop. The potential downside of this move is that the c8-h3 diagonal is blocked for his light-squared bishop. The different variations of the QGD all have their own strategy for assuring the satisfactory development of Black's light-squared bishop, either by carefully preparing a central ...e5 pawn-break, or by developing the bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal. The liberation of Black's light-squared bishop is a recurring theme in most QGD variations, and a glance at the scope and effectiveness of this piece is often a helpful indicator for measuring the overall success of Black's opening strategy.

3 ♘c3

White can also play 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 (3...c5 leads to lines of the Tarrasch – see Chapter 2) and now:

a) 4 g3 leads to the Catalan Opening and is beyond the scope of this book.

b) 4 ♘c3 – 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3.

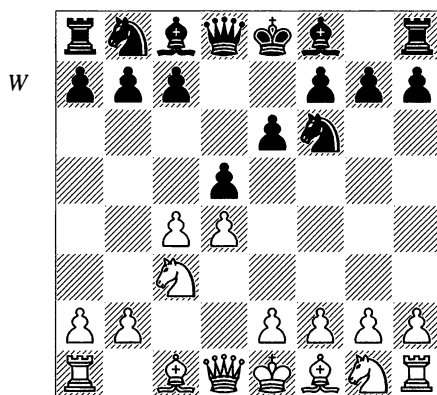
3...♘f6 (D)

Black has a few important alternatives here:

a) 3...c6 is known as the Triangle or Wedge Variation and is not covered in this book. It often leads into the Semi-Slav.

b) 3...♗e7 is the Alartortsev Variation (Chapter 1). One of the ideas behind the bishop development is to avoid the pin on the black knight that occurs after 3...♘f6 4 ♗g5.

c) 3...c5 is the Tarrasch Defence (Chapter 2), by which Black immediately frees his game at the cost of incurring an isolated pawn in many lines. The dangerous von Hennig-Schara Gambit is also covered here.



4 ♗g5

Alternatives:

a) 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 is the Exchange Variation (Chapter 3). The paradox of this line is that White voluntarily opens a diagonal for Black's light-squared bishop, yet this piece often has difficulty finding a useful role during the early stages of the game. This is not due to the structure, so much as the fact that White can play in such a way as to make it hard for this bishop to find a good post.

b) 4 ♘f3 and now:

b1) 4...dxc4 and then:

b11) 5 e3 c5 6 ♗xc4 a6 transposes into the Classical Variation of the Queen's Gambit Accepted. For coverage, see my book *How to Beat 1 d4*.

b12) 5 e4 ♗b4 6 ♗g5 is the Vienna Variation (Chapter 4).

b2) 4...c6 is the main-line position of the Semi-Slav, which is not considered in this book.

However, there is at least one significant transposition back to QGD territory: after 5 ♖g5 (5 e3 usually leads to the Meran), 5...♟bd7 6 e3 ♜a5 is the Cambridge Springs (Chapter 6), but note that Black more often plays 5...dxc4 (Botvinnik System) or 5...h6 (Moscow Variation).

b3) 4...♙b4 and here:

b31) 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♖g5 is the Ragozin Defence (Chapter 4).

b32) 5 ♖g5 dxc4 is the Vienna Variation (Chapter 4).

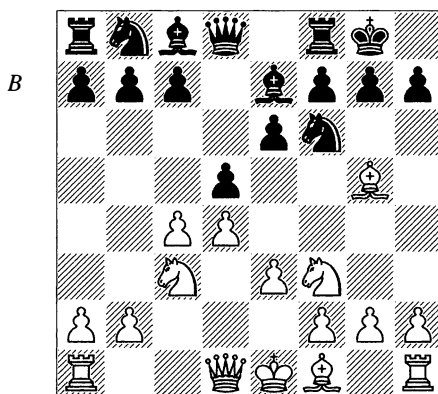
b4) 4...c5 is the Semi-Tarrasch Defence (Chapter 5). Two of the standard continuations are 5 e3 ♟c6, typically leading to positions with an isolated queen's pawn (IQP), and 5 cxd5 ♟xd5, when White has the possibility of constructing a large mobile pawn-centre.

b5) 4...♙e7 5 ♖f4 (for 5 ♖g5 see 4 ♖g5 lines) is the Blackburne Variation (Chapter 3).

4...♙e7

The bishop development is Black's most popular move. The main alternative is 4...♟bd7 5 e3 c6 6 ♟f3 ♜a5, known as the Cambridge Springs (Chapter 6). The Dutch-Peruvian Gambit 4...c5?! is also covered here.

5 e3 0-0 6 ♟f3 (D)



6...h6

This is Black's most popular and important move. 6...♟bd7 is the Classical Defence (Chapter 8).

7 ♖h4

7 ♖xf6 is the Anti-Tartakower (and Anti-Lasker) Variation (covered in Chapter 6).

After 7 ♖h4, Black has the following options:

a) 7...♟e4 is the Lasker Defence (Chapter 6), by which Black seeks to free his position by exchanging two sets of minor pieces.

b) 7...b6 is the popular Tartakower Defence (Chapter 7); Black prepares to develop his light-squared bishop on the long diagonal.

The Queen's Gambit Declined is an opening rich in strategic content – both players are confronted with challenging pawn-structure and piece-deployment decisions at an early stage of the game. Black has a choice of solid or sharp variations, and White must be well-prepared to fight for an opening advantage. I have taken extra care to point out move-order transpositions between QGD lines and even to different openings as there are many opportunities for both sides to manoeuvre their opponent into unfamiliar territory.

1 Alatortsev Variation

Introduction

The Alatortsev Variation arises via the move-order 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♗e7. The last eight World Champions from Vasily Smyslov to Vladimir Kramnik have all played this line at least once with the black pieces. Black's idea is to wait for White to play ♗f3 before playing ...♗f6. The move-order subtleties and possible transpositions are detailed in the notes to Game 1. The main lines of the Alatortsev arise after 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 c6. Now 6 ♖c2 is covered in Game 1, whereas 6 e3 is the subject of Game 2.

One of the most important issues that Black must address in the Queen's Gambit Declined is the development of his light-squared bishop. In several lines it is the last minor piece to be developed. Black faces a different challenge in the Alatortsev Variation: the light-squared bishop is typically developed to the f5-square, but then it can become a target for a g4 pawn advance. If Black retreats the bishop to g6, then White can follow up with the h4 pawn advance to hunt down the bishop. White can also leave his kingside pawns at home and harass the bishop by playing ♗ge2-g3. The Alatortsev Variation is rich in strategic content, and related themes involving an f5-bishop can be found in other 'light-square' openings such as the Slav (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 dxc4 5 a4 ♗f5) and the Caro-Kann Defence (1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4 ♗c3 e6 5 g4 ♗g6, or 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗f5 5 ♗g3 ♗g6).

The Games

Game 1 (Sargissian-Arlandi) features 6 ♖c2 g6 7 e3 ♗f5 8 ♖d2. Arlandi plays an early ...h5 to maintain his bishop on the f5-square. In reply, Sargissian offers an exchange of light-squared bishops with ♗d3; then after the trade he plays a quick e4 pawn-break to exploit Black's weakened kingside. The players castle on opposite wings and White's queenside pressure is balanced by Black's firm control of the d-file. Arlandi goes astray by breaking the link between his rooks; Sargissian manages to trap one of the rooks and he emerges with an extra piece after some tactical complications.

In **Game 2** (Onishchuk-Lputian), White varies with the sharp alternative 6 e3 ♗f5 7 g4!?. The players follow established theory until Onishchuk introduces a novelty on move 14. The new move is not successful as White's king remains trapped in the centre for several moves. Lputian responds to the challenge by boldly advancing his own kingside pawns and increasing the pressure on White's stranded king. An important motif is Black's h4-bishop pinning White's f2-knight; the bishop deployment prevents White from generating any play along the h-file. Onishchuk is finally able to castle queenside and remove his king from the centre at the cost of a pawn, but his remaining pawns are weak and Lputian is able to consolidate his material advantage. This game was very interesting from a strategic perspective because it featured a battle between duelling kingside pawn advances. Onishchuk's novelty did not pan out here, but we shall see more examples of his opening creativity in Games 18 and 20.

Game 1 [D31]

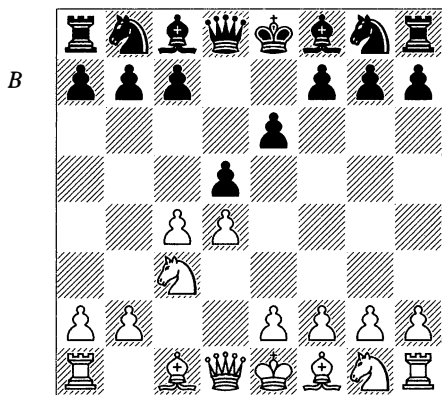
Gabriel Sargissian – Ennio Arlandi

*European Ch, Ohrid 2001***1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 (D)**

White can also play 3 ♘f3 ♘f6, and now:

a) 4 g3 is the Catalan Opening, which is beyond the scope of this book.

b) 4 ♘c3 – 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3.

**3...♗e7**

The subtle idea behind this bishop move is to avoid Exchange Variation lines in which White retains the possibility of developing his king's knight to e2 instead of to the f3-square. If White wishes to keep the option of playing a QGD with ♗g5, then his only reasonable waiting move is 4 ♘f3. The merits of White playing an Exchange Variation with ♘ge2 instead of ♘f3 will be debated in Chapter 3.

Black has several important alternatives here:

a) 3...c6 is known as the Triangle or Wedge Variation and is not covered in this book. It frequently leads to the Semi-Slav, though there are independent lines for both sides too.

b) 3...c5 is the Tarrasch Defence, covered in Chapter 2.

c) 3...♘f6 is Black's most popular choice; coverage begins with Chapter 3.

4 cxd5

The pawn capture leads to the characteristic positions of the Alartortsev Variation. The line is actually a form of the Exchange Variation

featuring the delayed development of Black's g8-knight and the deployment of White's dark-squared bishop to f4 instead of the traditional g5-square. Alternatives:

a) 4 e4 dxe4 5 ♘xe4 ♘f6 (5...♗b4+ 6 ♘c3 c5 is another solid line, more often reached via the 'Wedge' move-order 3...c6 4 e4 dxe4 5 ♘xe4 ♗b4+ 6 ♘c3 c5) 6 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 7 ♘f3 c5 8 ♗e3 cxd4 9 ♗xd4 ♘c6 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 with equal chances, Trenner-Teschner, Germany 1993/4.

b) 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 and now:

b1) 5 ♗f4 is covered in Games 8 and 9 of Chapter 3.

b2) 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 transposes to traditional lines with ...♗e7 including the Lasker, Tartakower and Classical defences. Coverage of these systems begins with Game 17 in Chapter 6.

4...exd5 5 ♗f4 c6

Black supports his d5-pawn and prepares to develop his light-squared bishop. The immediate 5...♗f5? is premature because of 6 ♗b3! ♘c6 7 ♗xb7 ♘b4 8 ♗c1 ♘f6 (Chekhov-Ubilava, Telavi 1982) 9 ♗xc7! ♗c8 10 ♗xc8+ ♗xc8 11 ♗e5 and White has a decisive material advantage.

A sound alternative is 5...♘f6 – 3...♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 ♗e7. This is a line of the Exchange Variation discussed in note 'a' to White's 5th move in Game 6.

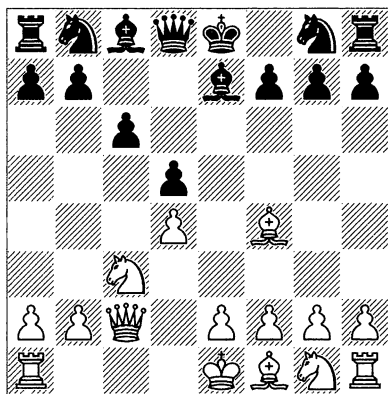
6 ♗c2 (D)

White is the first to occupy the wide-open b1-h7 diagonal and he temporarily prevents Black from developing his light-squared bishop to the optimal f5-square. The more popular 6 e3 is the subject of Game 2.

6...g6

This pawn advance is Black's most direct attempt to develop his light-squared bishop, but the move is double-edged. The justification for the pawn move is that White has not yet played e3, so Black cannot be prevented from following up with ...♗f5, but a potential drawback is

B



that the combination of ...♙e7 and ...g6 leaves a hole on h6. After Black develops his king's knight, White is sometimes able to disrupt Black's development plans with a timely ♙h6. Another potential issue is that after an exchange of dark-squared bishops, Black will have to guard the hole on f6.

Black has several interesting alternatives aimed at securing the development of his light-squared bishop:

a) 6...♘a6!? (the knight takes aim at the white queen) 7 e3 ♘b4 and now:

a1) 8 ♖b1 g6!? (I think this thematic move is preferable to 8...a5 9 a3 ♘a6 10 ♙d3 ♘f6 11 ♘f3 ♘c7 12 h3 with a slight advantage for White thanks to his more active pieces, Agrest-Azarov, European Ch, Ohrid 2001) 9 a3?! (safer is 9 ♖d1 ♙f5 10 ♙c1, with equal chances) 9...♙f5! (Black sacrifices a piece for three pawns to expose the white king) 10 e4 ♙xe4 11 ♘xe4 dxe4 12 axb4 ♙xb4+ 13 ♙d1 ♖xd4+ 14 ♙c1 ♘f6 gives Black a promising attack.

a2) 8 ♖d2 ♙f5 9 ♙c1 a5 10 a3 ♘a6 11 ♘ge2 with just a slight advantage for White, Yakovich-Galdunts, Moscow 1990.

b) 6...♙g4 (this is another method of contesting the b1-h7 diagonal; Hungarian GM Lajos Portisch has favoured this approach) 7 e3 ♙h5 8 ♙d3 ♙g6 9 ♘ge2 (the opening of the h-file is fine for Black after 9 ♙xg6 hxg6 10 f3 ♘d7 11 ♘ge2 ♘b6 12 b3 ♙d6 with a level game in M.Gurevich-Portisch, Wijk aan Zee 1990) 9...♘a6 10 a3 ♘f6 11 0-0 ♘c7 12 b4 with roughly equal chances; a draw was agreed here in Erdos-Portisch, Miskolc 2004.

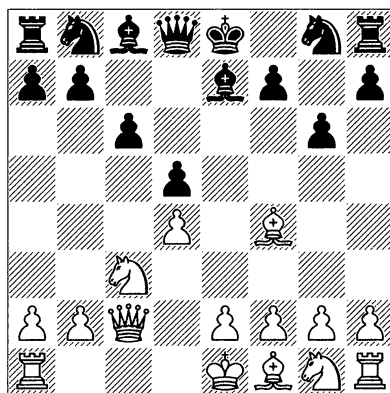
c) 6...♙d6 (the idea here is to vacate the e7-square to enable the black knight to support ...♙f5) and now:

c1) White achieves nothing after 7 ♘xd5 ♙xf4 8 ♘xf4 (White's king is too exposed after the greedy 8 ♖e4+? ♘e7 9 ♘xf4 ♖a5+ 10 ♙d1 ♙f5 11 ♖e3 ♖a4+ 12 b3 ♖a3 with a strong attack in return for the sacrificed pawn) 8...♖xd4 9 e3 ♖b4+ 10 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 11 ♙xd2 ♘f6 with a comfortable endgame for Black.

c2) 7 ♙g3 ♘e7 8 e3 ♙f5 9 ♖b3 ♘c8 10 ♘f3 (White must avoid 10 ♖xb7?? ♘b6 11 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 with the idea of ...♙c8 trapping the queen) 10...♖b6 (the opening of the h-file favours White after 10...♙xg3 11 hxg3 ♘d6 {Bareev-Doettling, Mainz 2006} 12 ♘e5 ♘d7 13 g4 ♙e6 14 0-0-0 with some initiative for White) 11 ♙e2 ♘a6 12 0-0 ♖xb3 13 axb3 ♘c7 with an equal endgame, Baburin-Vaganian, Los Angeles 1997.

We now return to the position after 6...g6 (D):

W



7 e3

White has some sharp alternatives:

a) 7 e4!? (this interesting sacrificial idea was suggested by Tal in *Informator* 6) 7...♙e6 (Tal assessed 7...dxe4 8 d5 as unclear; one possibility is 8...♘f6 9 d6! ♙f8 10 0-0-0 with dangerous threats) 8 e5 (8 ♖b3! looks strong; for example, 8...♖b6 9 ♖xb6 axb6 10 exd5 cxd5 11 ♘f3 with a structural advantage for White) 8...♙f5 9 ♖d2 ♘d7 10 ♙e2 h5 11 ♘f3 ♘f8 with sharp play in Garcia Martinez-Portisch, Reggio Emilia 1984/5.

b) With 7 f3!? White attempts to build a big centre; Latvian GM Alexei Shirov has experimented with this aggressive move. Now:

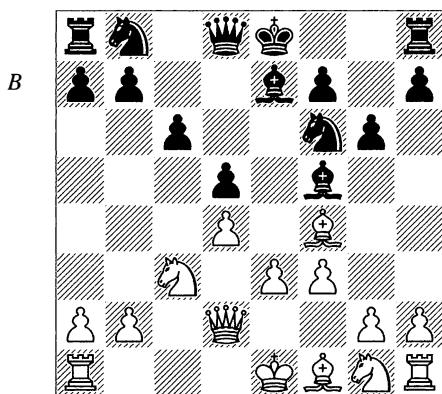
b1) 7...♙g5 8 ♙e5?! (White should play 8 ♙xg5 ♜xg5 9 ♜d2!? {9 e4!?!} 9...♜xd2+ 10 ♜xd2 with a slight endgame advantage for White, or 8 ♜d2!? ♙xf4 9 ♜xf4 ♜f6 10 ♜xf6 {10 ♜d2!? with the idea of e4} 10...♜xf6 11 e4 and White will be a little better in the endgame according to Shirov in *Informator* 48) 8...f6 9 ♙g3 ♙e3 with sharp play in Shirov-Magomedov, Frunze 1989.

b2) 7...♜f6 8 0-0-0 ♜h5 9 ♙h6 ♙g5+ 10 ♙xg5 ♜xg5+ 11 ♜b1 0-0 12 e4 with an advantage for White because of his strong centre, Izoria-Sturua, Dubai 2006.

7...♙f5 8 ♜d2 ♜f6

Another option is 8...♜d7 9 f3 ♜b6 (9...♜gf6 – 8...♜f6 9 f3 ♜bd7) 10 e4 ♙e6 11 e5! (paralysing the g8-knight) 11...h5 12 ♙d3 ♜d7 13 b3 (Karpov suggests the sharper 13 ♜ge2!? in his *Informator* 42 notes) 13...♙h4+ 14 g3 ♙e7 15 ♜f2 with an edge for White in Karpov-Kasparov, World Ch match (game 7), London/Leningrad 1986. White has a strong central pawn-wedge and Black has difficulty unravelling his kingside.

9 f3 (D)



9...h5!?

This space-grabbing idea was pioneered by Ukrainian GM Efim Geller; similar preventive ideas are well-known from other openings including the Sicilian Defence and the King's Indian Defence. The following examples show

how congested Black's position can become if White is allowed to achieve the g4 pawn advance:

a) 9...♜bd7 10 g4!? ♙e6 11 ♙h6! b5 12 ♜h3 ♜b6 13 b3 ♙d6 14 ♜f2 favours White because she can generate a central pawn-roller by advancing her e- and f-pawns, Krush-R.Bagirov, St Petersburg 2000.

b) 9...0-0 10 g4 ♙e6 11 ♜ge2 c5 12 h4 with a strong kingside attack, Belli-Upton, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988.

c) 9...c5 10 ♙h6!? cxd4 11 exd4 a6 (11...♜c6 {Gulko-Beliavsky, Linares 1989} 12 ♙b5! gives White a clear plus according to Kasparov) 12 g4! ♙e6 13 ♜ge2 ♜bd7?! (Kasparov prefers 13...♜c6) 14 ♙g2 ♜b6 15 b3 ♜c8 16 0-0 ♜c6 17 h3!, Kasparov-Short, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988. White is clearly better according to Kasparov in his *Informator* 46 notes.

10 ♙d3 ♙xd3 11 ♜xd3

Black has managed to exchange light-squared bishops, but White is well-positioned to grab the lion's share of the centre with a timely e4 pawn advance.

11...♜bd7 12 ♜ge2

White continues his central build-up. The immediate 12 e4? is premature in view of 12...dxe4 13 fxe4 ♜c5! 14 ♜e3 g5! with strong counterplay for Black because of tactical ideas involving ...♜g4.

12...♜f8

Black hurries to reposition his knight in anticipation of White's impending central advance. The alternative is 12...0-0 13 e4! dxe4 14 fxe4 ♜c5 15 ♜f3 ♜e6 16 0-0-0 with a clear plus for White, M.Gurevich-Geller, Moscow 1987. White has a powerful centre and good prospects of exploiting Black's vulnerable kingside; this is the drawback of Black's g- and h-pawn advances.

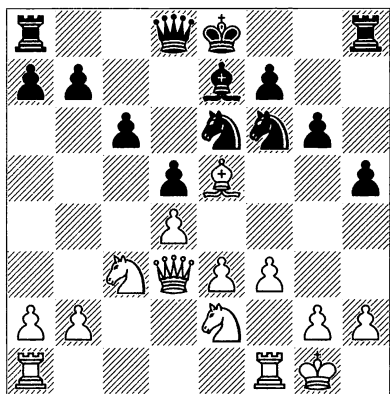
13 0-0 ♜e6 14 ♙e5 (D)

14...♙d6?!

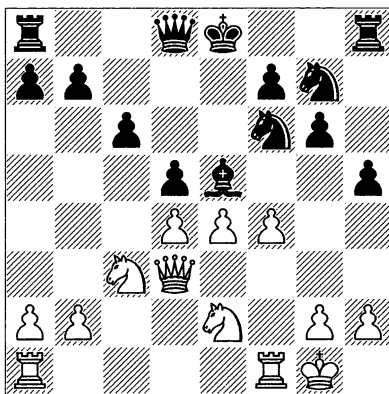
Black confronts White's centralized bishop, but the downside of this move is that it encourages White to launch a kingside attack. Alternatives:

a) 14...0-0 15 f4 (White should prefer 15 e4 ♜b6 16 ♜a4 ♜b4 17 b3 with a slight advantage thanks to his strong centre) 15...♜g7 16 f5!?

B



W



♖xf5 17 ♜xf5 gxf5 18 ♜xf5 (seven years prior to this game, Topalov gave 18 ♜f1 'with a clear plus for White', but Black appears to have sufficient defensive resources after 18...♗e4! 19 ♜xf5 f6 20 ♙f4 ♜d7 21 ♘g3 {21 ♜xh5 f5!}? 21...♗xg3 {or 21...h4 22 ♗xe4 dxe4 23 ♜xe4 hxg3 24 ♜g5+ fxg5 25 ♜g6+ ♖h8 26 ♜h6+ ♖g8 27 ♜g6+ with a draw} 22 ♜g5+ fxg5 {22...♖h8 23 ♜g6} 23 ♜g6+ ♖h8 24 ♜h6+ ♖g8 25 ♜g6+ with a draw by repetition) 18...♗g4 19 ♜xh5 (19 ♜f1!? ♙g5 20 ♙f4 ♙xf4 21 ♜xf4 gives White reasonable compensation for the loss of the exchange) 19...♗xe5 20 dxe5 ♙g5 and White doesn't quite have enough compensation, Tibensky-Kotan, Brno 2005.

b) 14...h4!? (the idea behind the pawn advance is to seize some space on the kingside and to give Black the option of unpinning his f6-knight with a timely ...♜h5) 15 ♜ae1 0-0 16 g4! hxg3 (16...♗d7 17 f4!? f6 18 ♜xg6+ ♗g7 with an unclear position according to Topalov in his *Informator 71* notes) 17 hxg3 ♗d7 18 ♖g2 (the white king steps up to clear a path to the h-file for his rooks) 18...♗xe5 19 dxe5 ♜d7 20 f4 with equal chances, Topalov-Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

15 f4 ♗g7

Black tries to blunt the effect of White's threatened f5 pawn advance, but the line-up of black pieces on the long diagonal does not inspire confidence.

16 e4!

Sargissian breaks open the centre to exploit the vulnerability of the black king.

16...♙xe5 (D)

17 dxe5?

This is the wrong choice, as now Black is able to alleviate the central pressure and safeguard his king. White should recapture toward the centre and open lines for his rooks with 17 fxe5 ♗xe4 18 ♗xe4 dxe4 19 ♜xe4 ♗f5 20 ♜ac1 ♜d5 (20...0-0 21 ♜xf5! gxf5 22 ♜xf5 gives White a strong attack) 21 ♜xd5 cxd5 22 ♜c7 and White has a clear advantage because of his active rook combined with Black's weak d5-pawn.

17...♜b6+ 18 ♖h1 ♗xe4 19 ♗xe4 dxe4 20 ♜xe4 0-0-0

The black king is quite safe on the queenside; this move also has the benefit of seizing the open d-file.

21 ♜c4 ♗d7 22 ♗g3 h4 23 ♗e4 ♗f5 24 ♜c3 ♜hd8

Black could centralize his queen and exploit White's unstable knight with 24...♜d4!? 25 ♜xd4 (the tactical justification is 25 ♗d6+?? ♜xd6! 26 exd6 ♗g3+ and Black wins; also, 25 ♜f3 ♜e3 26 ♜ae1 ♜xf3 27 ♜xf3 ♜hd8 is fine for Black) 25...♜xd4 26 ♜fe1 ♜hd8 and Black's total domination of the d-file gives him a good game.

25 ♗c5 ♜d2 26 b4 ♜b5

The queen move creates the dual threats of ...♜xa2 and ...♜e2.

27 ♜fe1 ♜f2?

Arlandi targets White's vulnerable f4-pawn, but the rook move has a tactical flaw. Black can secure excellent chances by 27...h3! 28 ♜xh3 (28 g4? ♜d3!) 28...♜xb4.

28 a4 ♜b6 29 ♗d3!

Black's wandering rook is suddenly trapped behind enemy lines. The knight retreat is easy to miss because it was unplayable for several moves while both of Black's rooks were patrolling the d-file.

29...♖g3+

This creative sacrifice doesn't work, but even after 29...♗xd3 30 ♖xd3 ♗xf4 31 b5 White has a decisive material advantage.

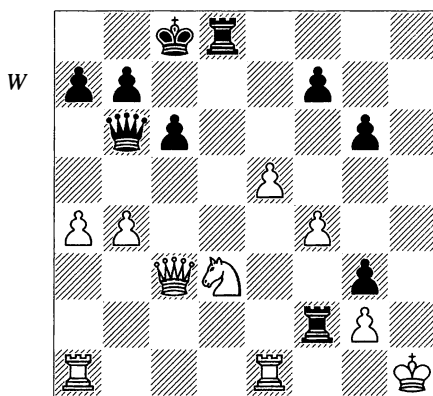
30 hxg3 hxg3 (D)

31 ♖c5

The knight move is sufficient to wrap up the full point, but the most accurate move is 31 e6! (controlling the h8-square) 31...fxe6 32 ♖xf2 gxf2 (32...♖xf2 33 ♗ad1 wins for White) 33 ♗ed1 and White has an extra rook.

31...♗xf4 32 ♖xg3 ♗h8+ 33 ♖g1 ♖xb4 34 ♖d3 ♖b6+ 35 ♖e3 ♗d4 36 ♖f2 ♗h8 37 a5 ♖c7 38 e6 fxe6 39 ♖xe6+ ♖b8 40 ♖xg6 a6

Black creates some *luft* for his king, but now White transfers his queen to the vulnerable g1-a7 diagonal.



41 ♗e8 ♖a7 42 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 43 ♖c2 ♗d5 44 ♖c3 ♗g5 45 ♖e3+ ♖a8 46 ♗a4 ♖g8 47 g4 ♗b5

The rook shift to the queenside hastens the end as now Black is unable to defend his back rank, but 47...♖d8 48 ♗e4 ♗g8 49 ♖c5 also leaves White with a decisive advantage.

48 ♗e4 ♗b1+ 49 ♖h2 ♖h7+ 50 ♖g2 1-0

Game 2 [D31]

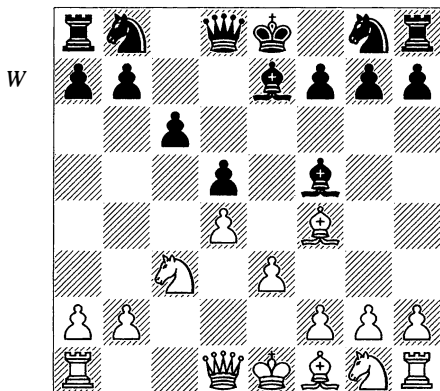
Alexander Onishchuk – Smbat Lputian

Poikovsky 2001

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♗e7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 c6 6 e3

White allows Black to develop his light-squared bishop to f5. 6 ♖c2 was covered in Game 1.

6...♗f5 (D)



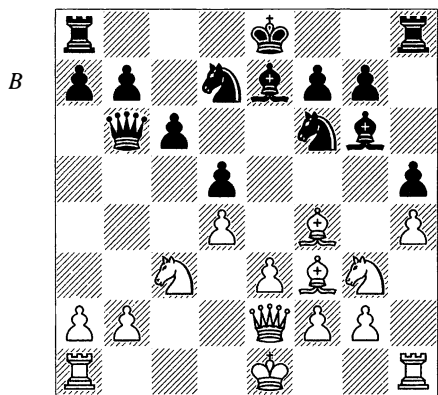
7 g4!?

This aggressive space-gaining thrust was played three times by Botvinnik in his 1963 match with Petrosian. Nowadays an early flank advance is taken for granted in many openings, but the pawn spike was a sensational idea in 1963. White gains a tempo by attacking Black's light-squared bishop; the advanced g-pawn also interferes with Black's kingside development because the natural ...♖f6 can often be met by g5. Quieter alternatives include:

a) 7 ♗d3 (White offers to exchange his 'good' bishop for Black's 'bad' bishop; the move appears to be counter-intuitive, but White hopes to exploit his slight lead in development) 7...♗xd3 8 ♖xd3 ♖f6 9 ♖f3 ♖bd7 10 h3 0-0 11 0-0 ♗e8 12 ♗ab1 (White prepares a traditional minority attack with b4; we shall see more of this idea in Chapter 3) 12...a5 13 a3 a4 (this move is possible here because the white

queen has been lured away from the d1-square) 14 ♖c2 ♗a5 15 ♜fd1 ♕f8 16 ♜e5 (Larsen-Spassky, Montreal 1979) 16...♗a6!? (Larsen's suggestion) 17 ♖f5 ♜e6 with equal chances. The lack of a light-squared bishop makes it difficult for White to generate any kingside pressure.

b) 7 ♜ge2 (this flexible move gives White the option of deploying the knight to g3 or f4 depending upon Black's reaction) 7...♜d7 (this is Black's most flexible reply, maintaining control over the h4-square) 8 ♜g3 ♕g6 9 ♕e2 ♜gf6 10 h4 h5 (10...h6 11 h5 ♕h7 12 ♕d3 ♖b6 { Adorjan-Liang Jinrong, Shenzhen 1992} 13 ♕xh7! ♖xb2 14 ♜ge2 ♜xh7 15 ♜b1 ♗a3 16 ♜xb7 favours White because of his active rook) 11 ♕f3 ♖b6 12 ♗e2 (D).



12...♕f8!? (the black king steps aside to make way for the rook; also playable is the older 12...a5 13 ♕g5 ♗a6 14 ♖xa6 ♜xa6 with equal chances, Bagirov-Lerner, Frunze 1979) 13 a3 a5 14 0-0 ♕e8 15 ♜fe1 ♗d8 16 ♜ad1 ♜g4!? with sharp play, N.Pedersen-Doettling, Bundesliga 2002/3.

7...♕e6

This is the preferred retreat for the bishop. Black has difficulty challenging White's active pieces after 7...♕g6 8 h4! h5 (Black's vulnerable queenside is exposed after 8...♕xh4? 9 ♖b3 b6 10 ♜xh4! ♖xh4 11 ♜xd5 with crushing threats, N.Brunner-Gosset, Marseilles 2001) 9 g5 ♕d6 10 ♜ge2 ♜a6!? (heading for b4 or c7; the alternative is 10...♜e7 11 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 12 ♜f4 {the f4-knight exerts strong pressure on

Black's kingside} 12...♜d7 13 ♕e2 ♜f5 14 ♜c1 ♖b4 15 ♗d2 with a slight advantage for White, Knaak-Diaz, Balatonbereny 1987) 11 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 12 ♜f4 (once again this is an ideal post for the knight) 12...♜c7 13 ♕e2 ♖b4 14 ♗d2 ♜e7 15 ♕f3 ♜e6 16 ♜ce2 ♜xf4 17 ♜xf4 ♖xd2+ 18 ♕xd2 with an advantage for White thanks to his well-placed knight, Karpov-Portisch, Linares 1989. Karpov went on to win a very instructive rook endgame.

8 h4

This approach is consistent: White grabs more space on the kingside. Alternatives include:

a) 8 h3 and now:

a1) 8...♜f6 9 ♕d3 c5 10 ♜f3 ♜c6 11 ♕f1!? (White castles 'by hand'; he leaves the rook on h1 to support the h-pawn) 11...0-0 12 ♕g2 ♜c8 13 ♜c1 ♕e8 (13...a6!? was suggested by Korchnoi; then 14 dxc5 ♕xc5 15 ♜e2 ♖b6 is equal) 14 dxc5 ♕xc5 15 ♜b5 ♕f8 (after 15...♖b6? 16 ♕c7! White wins material; this is why it is important to keep the white knight away from the b5-square) 16 ♜fd4 with a slight advantage for White in the well-known game Korchnoi-Karpov, World Ch match (game 13), Merano 1981.

a2) 8...♜d7 (this move is more accurate) 9 ♜f3?! (safer is 9 ♕d3 – 8 ♕d3 ♜d7 9 h3) 9...g5!? 10 ♕g3 h5! 11 gxf5 ♜xh5 12 ♜e5 ♜gf6 with a slight advantage for Black thanks to his superior pawn-structure, Bern-Agdestein, Oslo 1991.

b) 8 ♕d3 ♜d7 9 h3 g5!? (two can play at this game of advancing the g-pawn; the older 9...h5 10 gxf5 ♜df6, with a balanced game, is also adequate; a recent example is Wintzer-Vaganian, Bundesliga 2005/6) 10 ♕g3 h5 11 f3 (White has trouble activating his king's knight after 11 gxf5 ♜gf6 12 ♕e2 ♖b6 with good play for the sacrificed pawn) 11...♜gf6 12 ♜h2 ♜b6 13 ♗e2 ♕d6 with a comfortable position for Black as he will exchange White's active bishop, Krush-Bruzon, Buenos Aires 2003.

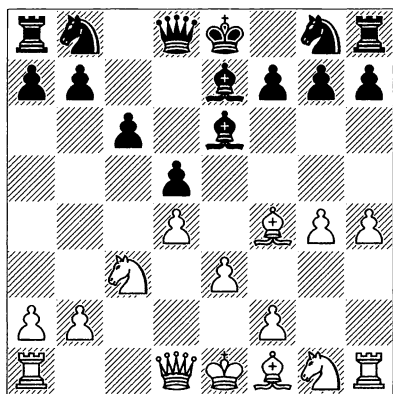
We now return to 8 h4 (D):

8...♜d7

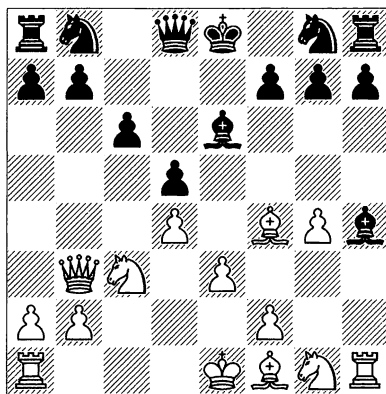
Black has a wide choice of playable alternatives here:

a) 8...c5 9 ♕e5! and then:

B



B



a1) 9...Qf8 10 Qh3 Qc6 11 Qf4 “favours White somewhat because of the weak d5-pawn” – Watson.

a2) 9...Qf6 10 Qxb8 Qxb8 11 g5 Qe7 12 Qg2 favours White, Dautov-Lputian, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

a3) 9...Qf6!? (‘?’ – Dautov, but this razor-sharp move is worthy of attention) 10 g5 Qg4 11 Qxb8 Qxb8 12 Qd2 (the idea of f3 gives White a clear plus according to Dautov in his *Informator 80* notes, but Black can fight on) 12...cxd4 13 exd4 Qd6 14 0-0-0 0-0 with an unclear position. Note that White must avoid 15 f3? Qc7! 16 Qh3 Qh2!, when Black has crushing threats.

b) 8...Qf6 9 g5 Qe4 10 Qd3 Qa5 11 Qf1!? Qxc3 (11...Qd6!? was suggested by Georgiev in *Informator 80*; 12 h5 looks like a reasonable reply) 12 bxc3 Qd7 (12...Qxc3 13 Qe2 Qa5 14 Qb1 with compensation for the material according to Georgiev; then Black can try 14...Qc8!? intending ...Qd7) 13 Qe2 (so far this is the game Ki.Georgiev-Lputian, Istanbul Olympiad 2000) 13...Qd8 14 Qg3 Qf8 with equal chances.

c) 8...Qb6 (Black expends another tempo retreating his queen on move 12, but the idea is to inhibit White from castling queenside) 9 Qb1 Qd7 10 h5 h6 11 f3 Qgf6 12 Qd3 Qd8 with equal chances, Kruppa-Grigoriants, Elista 2000.

d) 8...Qxh4 9 Qb3 (D) and here:

d1) 9...b6 10 Qf3 Qe7 11 Qe5 Qf6 (the alternative 11...Qd6!?, with the idea of ...Qe7, was suggested by Gulko; I think White should reply 12 Qc2 h6 13 0-0-0 with good compensation for the pawn) 12 g5 Qfd7 13 g6! Qxe5 14

Qxe5 Qf6 15 Qxh7 0-0. So far this is Gulko-Lputian, USA-Armenia match, Glendale 1994. Now one idea is 16 Qxf6 Qxf6 17 Qd3 fxe6 (and not Gulko’s 17...Qf5?, which fails to 18 Qxd5! cxd5 19 Qxd5 Qxd3 {19...Qxg6 20 Qh1! wins for White} 20 Qh8+! Qxh8 21 Qh5+ Qg8 22 Qh7#) 18 Qh2 intending 0-0-0 with a strong attack.

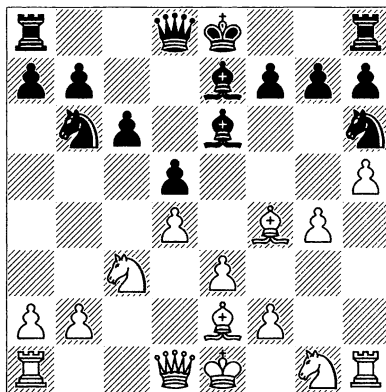
d2) 9...g5! (active defence is best) 10 Qh2! Qb6 11 Qf3 Qxb3 12 axb3 Qxg4 13 Qxh4 gxh4 1/2-1/2 Yudasin-Vaiser, Tmava 1983. A possible continuation is 14 Qe5 (14 b4!?) 14...f6 15 Qxb8 Qxb8 16 Qxa7 Qe7 17 Qxh4 Qf5 with equal chances.

9 h5 Qh6!

Efim Geller’s creative knight development has become established as the strongest move here. Black supports an eventual ...f5 pawn-break and forces White to expend a tempo defending the g-pawn.

10 Qe2 Qb6 (D)

W



11 ♖h3

White completes his kingside development.
Alternatives:

a) 11 ♜c1 and then:

a1) 11...♙d6?! (the drawback of this move is that it facilitates the activation of White's king's knight) 12 ♖h3 ♙xf4 13 ♖xf4 ♙d7 14 ♜g1 with a slight space advantage for White in Kasparov-Karpov, World Ch match (21), Moscow 1985.

a2) 11...♖c4 12 ♙xc4 dxc4 13 ♙xh6 gxh6 (Kasparov evaluated this as 'unclear' in *Informator 40*) 14 ♖h3 (14 f4 ♙b4 gives Black good counterplay against the wave of white pawns) 14...♙d6 (another reasonable idea is 14...♚d7!? 15 f3 f5 to activate the light-squared bishop) 15 f4 f6 with equal chances, Muller-Daurelle, IECG e-mail 2001.

b) 11 ♙xh6!? (this obvious move awaits a practical trial) 11...gxh6 12 ♖h3 ♙d6 (to inhibit ♖f4) 13 ♚c2 ♚d7 14 ♜g1 0-0-0 15 0-0-0 ♙b8 with a balanced position; Black's bishop-pair is offset by White's superior pawn-structure.

11...g5!

Black gains some space on the kingside and invites White to open the h-file.

12 hxg6

1/2-1/2 Milov-Lputian, European Ch, Ohrid 2001; this was played 37 days after Onishchuk-Lputian! White is compelled to open the h-file because after 12 ♙g3 ♚d7 13 f3 f5 14 ♙e5 0-0! Black takes over the initiative on the kingside.

12...hxg6 13 f3

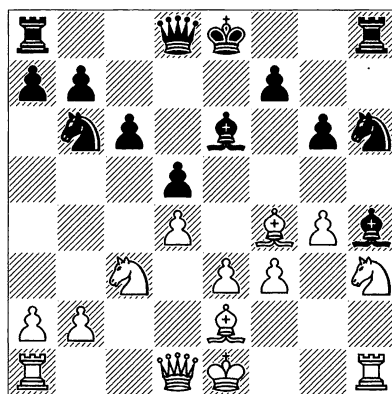
White supports the g4-pawn so that he can develop his queen.

13...♙h4+ (D)**14 ♖f2?!**

The knight retreat was Onishchuk's novelty. However, it is safer for White to abandon the right to castle and avoid the pin with 14 ♖d2 g5! (Black has a slight advantage according to Vaiser in *Informator 44*) 15 ♙h2 f5 16 gxf5 (16 ♙e5 ♜g8 17 ♖f2!? was suggested by Watson; now 17...♖f7! looks advantageous to Black because of White's vulnerable king position) 16...♖xf5 with an advantage for Black thanks to his more active pieces, Vaiser-Timoshchenko, Tashkent 1987.

14...g5!

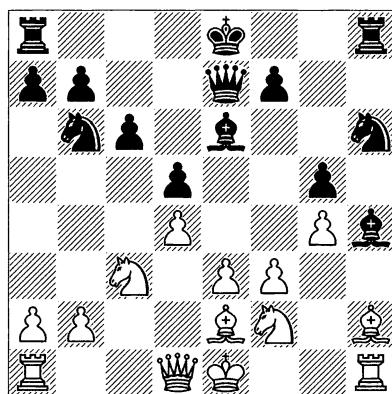
W



The pawn-thrust cuts off any retreat for the dark-squared bishop, but Black is preparing to shift the battle from the h-file to the f-file to exploit White's pinned knight.

15 ♙h2 ♚e7 (D)

W

**16 ♚c2**

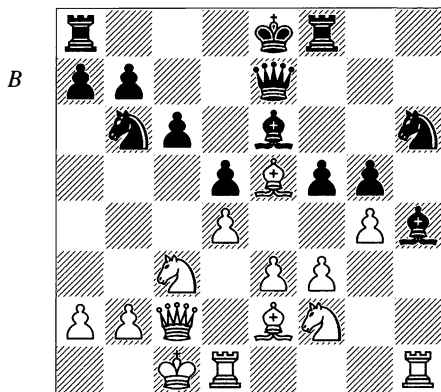
White has also tried the central advance 16 e4 dxe4 (another idea is 16...0-0-0!? 17 0-0 dxe4 18 fxe4 ♙c4 with an unbalanced position) 17 fxe4? (the last chance is 17 ♖cxe4, as suggested by Watson; then Black could consider the promising exchange sacrifice 17...0-0-0!? 18 ♙e5 f5 to blast open the centre and exploit the pin on the f2-knight) 17...♖c4 18 ♙xc4 ♖xg4 19 ♙g3 ♖xf2 20 ♙xf2 ♙xf2+ 21 ♖xf2 ♜xh1 22 ♚xh1 ♚f6+ and Black recovers the piece with a clear extra pawn, Turov-Vaganian, Moscow 2002.

16...f5!

Avoiding the careless 16...0-0-0? 17 ♖b5!, when suddenly White has a strong attack.

17 ♖e5 ♜f8 18 0-0-0 (D)

White's king flees the danger zone because 18 gxf5? ♜xf5 19 ♜cd1 g4! is crushing for Black thanks to the pin on the f2-knight.

**18...♜f7 19 gxf5?!**

White's best practical chance is to unbalance the position by means of 19 ♜d3!? ♜c4 20 gxf5 ♜xe3 (20...♖xf5 21 e4 with counterplay) 21 f6! ♜d8 22 ♜d2 ♜xd1 23 ♜xd1 with some compensation for the loss of the exchange, as Black's king is stranded in the centre of the board and his h4-bishop is out of play.

19...♖xf2 20 fxe6 ♖xe3+ 21 ♖b1 ♜xe5

Black must avoid 21...♜xe6?? 22 ♜b5! cxb5 23 ♖xb5+ ♜d7 24 ♜de1 (suddenly Black is vulnerable along the e-file) 24...♜fxe5 25 ♜xe3 ♜d8 26 dxe5 with a strong attack.

22 dxe5 ♜xe6 23 ♖f1

The lure of the seventh rank is an illusion: after 23 ♜h7 0-0-0 24 ♜b5 ♖b8 25 ♜d6 ♜d7 Black has neutralized the invading forces and he will soon pick up a second pawn.

23...g4! (D)

A good practical decision. Alternatives:

a) 23...♖xf3? 24 ♜h8+ and then:

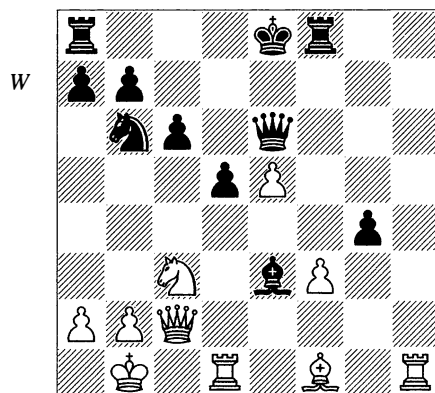
a1) 24...♜d7 25 ♜xd5 cxd5(?) 26 ♖b5+ ♜e7 27 ♜c7+ ♜d7 28 ♜h7+ and White wins.

a2) 24...♜e7 25 ♜xd5+! cxd5 (25...♜xd5 26 ♜xa8 with a decisive material advantage) 26 ♜c7+ ♜d7(?) 27 ♜h7+ ♜f7 28 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 29 e6+! ♜xe6 30 ♖h3+ winning the queen; this is why it is important to close the h3-c8 diagonal.

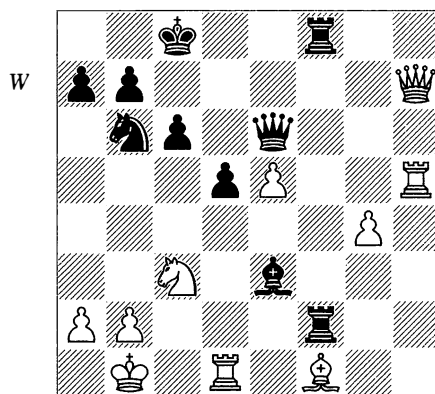
a3) 24...♜f8 25 ♖h3 g4 (25...♜xe5 26 ♜g6+ ♜e7 27 ♜h7+ ♜d8 28 ♜xb7 and White wins)

26 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 27 ♜f1+ ♜e8 28 ♜f6 ♜xe5 29 ♜g6+ ♜d8 30 ♖xg4 and White has crushing threats despite his two-pawn deficit.

b) 23...♜xe5!? 24 ♖h3 ♜d8 gives Black a clear advantage thanks to his two extra pawns, but White has some practical counter-chances because of Black's misplaced king.

**24 fxe4 0-0-0 25 ♜h5 ♜f2 26 ♜h7**

No relief is offered by 26 ♜d3 ♜c4 27 ♖e2 ♖f4 28 ♜d4 ♜xe2! 29 ♜xe2 ♖xe5 30 ♜xa7 ♖xb2, when Black has a decisive attack.

26...♜df8 (D)**27 ♜f5**

White runs out of tactical tricks after 27 ♖e2 ♜d7 28 ♜c2 ♖b8 (28...♜xe5?? 29 ♜xd5 lets White back into the game) 29 ♜h7 ♖b6, whereupon Black will round up the e5-pawn.

27...♜2xf5 28 gxf5 ♜xe5 29 f6 ♖d4 30 ♖h3+ ♖b8 0-1

2 Tarrasch Defence

Introduction

The Tarrasch Defence is characterized by the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 c5. The main lines of this opening start after 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f3 ♗c6 and feature a classic battle between pawn-structure and piece activity. Black accepts the potential burden of an isolated d5-pawn in exchange for easy development and open lines. The question naturally follows: why would a player voluntarily take on an isolated d5-pawn? The answer is related to an issue we discussed in Chapter 1: the development of Black's light-squared bishop. The Tarrasch is one of the few Queen's Gambit Declined variations in which Black can quickly develop his light-squared bishop, and this is one of the attractions of the opening. Another benefit of the Tarrasch, of a more purely practical nature, is that it can be employed against various English, Réti, King's Indian Attack, or Catalan move-orders. For example:

- 1 c4 e6 2 ♗c3 d5 3 d4 c5
- 1 ♗f3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d4 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗c3 ♗c6
- 1 ♗f3 d5 2 g3 c5 3 ♕g2 ♗c6 4 d4 e6 5 c4 ♗f6 6 cxd5 exd5
- 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 c5 4 g3 ♗c6 5 ♕g2 ♗f6 6 cxd5 exd5

Every fifteen or twenty years, a great player takes up the mantle of the Tarrasch Defence: the Estonian GM Paul Keres and former World Champions Boris Spassky and Garry Kasparov were among its foremost practitioners. The leading active proponent of the Tarrasch Defence is Russian GM Alexander Grishchuk. The common link between successful Tarrasch Defence players is their creative ability to obtain positions in which the isolated d5-pawn is not a liability to be defended, but rather an asset to be sacrificed for open lines.

The Games

Game 3 (Filippov-Romanov) features the solid 6 e3 ♗f6 7 ♖b5 ♖d6 8 dxc5 ♕xc5. Filippov fianchettoes his dark-squared bishop and Romanov prepares a kingside attack. Black commits a subtle tactical error near the end of the opening; the miscue allows White to sacrifice the exchange and saddle Black with a weak pawn-structure. The middlegame features an instructive knight-plus-pawn versus rook battle.

In **Game 4** (Evseev-Emelin), White plays the challenging variation beginning with 6 g3 ♗f6 7 ♕g2 ♖e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 dxc5 ♕xc5. Evseev soon exchanges a bishop for a knight and he tries to push Emelin off the board by expanding on the queenside. Black relieves the pressure by exchanging one of his bishops for a knight in order to create a middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops. Evseev wins a pawn, but in the process Emelin is able to exchange queens and maintain the equilibrium with careful play in the endgame.

Game 5 (S.Ivanov-Lugovoi), White varies with the popular 9 ♕g5 and he quickly manoeuvres a knight to c5. Black exchanges his dark-squared bishop for the knight to relieve the pressure. The early middlegame is an excellent demonstration of why piece activity is so important for Black in

the Tarrasch: Ivanov has the bishop-pair and the superior pawn-structure, yet Lugovoi is able to seize the initiative by using his more active queen to create dangerous kingside threats. An exchange sacrifice increases the tension and culminates in an exciting finish.

Game 3 [D32]

Valery Filippov – Evgeny Romanov

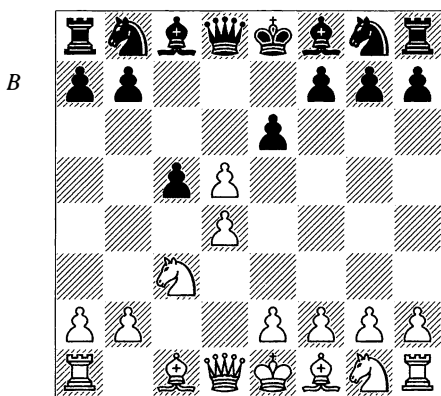
Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5

3...♗e7 was covered in Chapter 1.

The move played is the characteristic move of the Tarrasch Defence, by which Black actively contests the centre and obtains free development for his pieces, usually at the cost of an isolated d-pawn.

4 cxd5 (D)



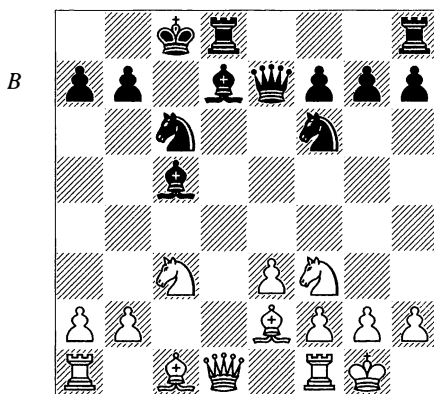
4...exd5

Black has an important alternative here in the form of 4...cxd4, the dangerous von Hennig-Schara Gambit. This sharp line has a poor reputation among strong players, but the gambit is not so easy to refute and it is a potentially venomous surprise weapon, particularly at club level. Let's take a brief detour to examine the main lines:

a) 5 ♗xd4 gives Black the additional option (compared with line 'b') of 5...♗c6 6 ♗d1 exd5 7 ♗xd5 ♗e6!? (7...♗d7 – 5 ♗a4+ ♗d7 6 ♗xd4 exd5 7 ♗xd5 ♗c6) 8 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 9 e3 ♗b4 10 ♗b5+ ♗e7 11 ♗f1 with a sharp position that favours White. I won't examine this line in detail, but I do want to point out that

there is a considerable amount of theory here and Black has plenty of counterplay.

b) 5 ♗a4+ ♗d7 6 ♗xd4 exd5 7 ♗xd5 ♗c6 8 ♗f3 ♗f6 9 ♗d1 (White has also played 9 ♗b3, but the queen retreat back home is preferable because it leaves the b-pawn free to advance) 9...♗c5 10 e3 ♗e7 (three development tempi in an open position would normally be sufficient compensation for a pawn, but here White's e3-pawn shields the e-file and controls two key squares; tournament experience has shown that White has an advantage here provided he plays accurately to exploit his material advantage) 11 ♗e2 0-0-0 (this move has been preferred over 11...0-0 by a ratio of roughly 7:1, but kingside castling may be stronger because Black's king often comes under attack on the queenside) 12 0-0 (D).

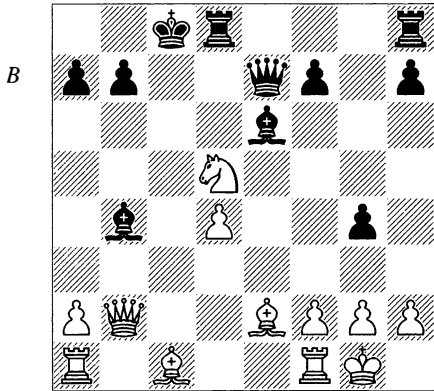


Black must decide whether to expend a tempo to safeguard his king, or attack at any price:

b1) 12...♗b8 13 a3 g5 14 b4 ♗b6 15 b5 ♗e5 16 ♗d4 ♗eg4!? (16...♗c8?! 17 a4 ♗c7 18 ♗d2 with a strong initiative on the queenside, Lalić-Russek, Linares open 1998; 16...♗a5 17

♠d2 ♠c7 {Ordonez-Russek Libni, Valencia 2000} 18 ♖b3 favours White) 17 ♖b3 ♗d6 (Black should avoid 17...♠xd4 18 exd4 ♗d6 19 g3 ♗xd4 20 b6 a6 21 ♠xg5 with crushing threats) 18 ♜f3 ♠e6 19 ♖b4 ♠c5 20 ♗a4 gives White a clear plus as Black has no compensation for his pawn deficit.

b2) 12...g5 13 ♜d4 g4 14 b4! (this is a typical motif in this line: White returns the extra pawn in order to accelerate his queenside attack) 14...♠xb4 15 ♖b3 ♜xd4 16 exd4 ♠e6 (this is stronger than 16...♠c6 17 ♜b5 ♠xb5 18 ♠xb5 and Black's exposed king quickly perished in Flear-McSheehy, Charlton 1983) 17 ♖b2 ♜d5 18 ♜xd5 (D) and now Black has a choice of recaptures:



b21) 18...♠xd5 19 ♠f4 ♠d6 20 ♠xg4+ ♜b8 21 ♜fe1 and then:

b211) 21...♗f6 (played in M.Rice-Daurelle, IECG 1997) 22 ♠e5! (Black's position would be satisfactory if he were not a pawn down!) 22...♠xe5 (22...♗h4 23 ♠xd6+ ♜xd6 – 21...♗h4 22 ♠xd6+ ♜xd6) 23 dx5 ♗g5 24 ♠h3 ♜hg8 25 ♜ad1 with a clear extra pawn for White; Black's threats against the g2-pawn are easily parried.

b212) 21...♗h4 22 ♠xd6+ ♜xd6 23 ♖a3 ♜g6 24 ♠f3 with a clear advantage for White according to Prudnikova in her *Informator 50* notes.

b22) 18...♜xd5 19 ♠f4 ♠d6 20 ♠xd6 ♗xd6 21 ♜fb1 b6 22 a4 with a strong queenside initiative for White, Prudnikova-Voiska, Women's Interzonal, Azov 1990.

This was a detailed note and the idea is not to memorize the above lines; instead, focus on the idea of White playing the b4 pawn advance to develop his queenside initiative. As an aside, it is worth noting that this gambit is not available to Black if White has played a move-order with an early ♜f3 instead of ♜c3.

5 ♜f3

White can also play the sideline 5 dxc5 d4 6 ♜e4 (6 ♜a4 is another sharp option) 6...♜c6 (Black should avoid the hasty 6...♠xc5?! 7 ♜xc5 ♗a5+ 8 ♠d2 ♗xc5 9 ♜c1 ♗f5 10 ♗a4+ ♜c6 11 ♜f3 with a clear plus for White due to his powerful bishop-pair, Maksimenko-Kosić, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2002) 7 ♜f3 and then:

a) 7...♠f5 8 ♜g3 ♠g4 9 ♖c2 (Bareev-Lobron, Dortmund 1995) 9...♗a5+!? 10 ♠d2 ♗xc5 11 ♗e4+! ♠e6 12 ♜g5 (Bareev considers this position to be slightly better for White in his *Informator 64* notes, but I think Black can equalize with a few precise moves) 12...♜f6 13 ♜xe6 ♜xe4 14 ♜xc5 ♜xd2 15 ♜c1 (15 ♜xb7?! ♠b4! favours Black) 15...♜xf1 16 ♜xf1 0-0-0 with equal chances.

b) 7...♗d5 8 ♜d6+ ♠xd6 9 cxd6 ♗xd6 10 g3 ♜f6 11 ♠g2 ♠f5 12 0-0 ♠e4 with a balanced game, Ivanisević-G.M.Todorović, Vrnjačka Banja 2005. White has the bishop-pair, but Black's d4-pawn slightly cramps White's position.

5...♜c6 (D)

5...♜f6 is inaccurate because of 6 ♠g5 ♠e6 7 e3 (7 e4!? is another sharp line) 7...♜c6 8 ♠b5 ♜c8 9 0-0 c4 10 e4! with a central initiative as Black's kingside is undeveloped, Ehlvest-Rohonyan, Virginia Beach 2007.

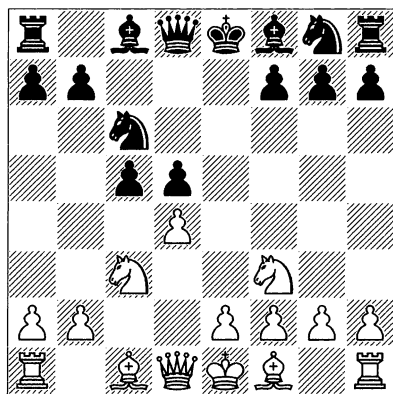
6 e3

White bolsters his d-pawn and prepares to develop his light-squared bishop; the drawback is that he has reduced the scope of his dark-squared bishop. The kingside fianchetto beginning with 6 g3 is generally regarded as White's most challenging continuation; this line is the subject of Games 4 and 5.

6...♜f6 7 ♠b5

White pins the black knight. The quieter 7 ♠e2 is another major branch of opening theory.

W

**7...♙d6 8 dxc5**

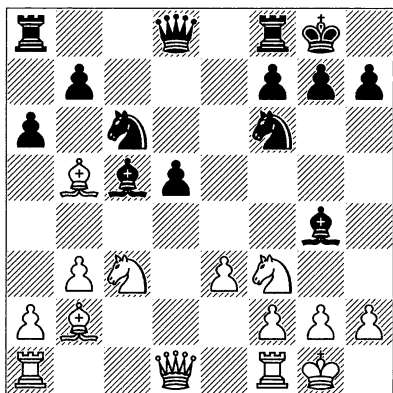
Now that Black has moved his dark-squared bishop, White exchanges pawns to pick up a tempo. This is a typical idea in many lines of the Queen's Gambit.

8...♙xc5 9 0-0 0-0 10 b3

The queenside fianchetto is the logical follow-up to 8 dxc5, as White's bishop will be well-placed on the a1-h8 diagonal.

10...♙g4 11 ♙b2 a6 (D)

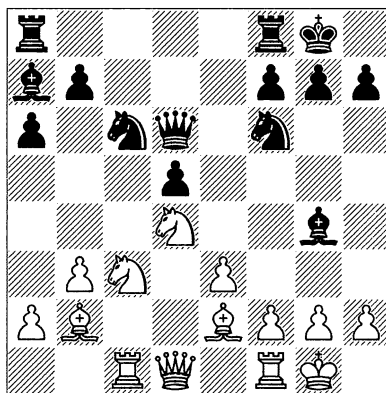
W

**12 ♙e2**

An alternative plan for White is to exchange minor pieces and exert pressure on Black's queenside pawns with 12 ♙xc6 bxc6 13 ♖c1 ♙d6 14 ♗e2!? ♙xf3 (another idea is 14...c5!? 15 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗xd5 ♖ad8 with good play for the pawn) 15 gxf3 ♖c8 16 ♗d3 ♗d7 17 ♗g3 ♙e5 with equal chances, Kasparov-J. Wilson, London simul 2003.

12...♙a7 13 ♖c1

B

**14...♗e5?**

This is a typical move in the Tarrasch Defence, but here the idea is mistimed because of the vulnerable position of the black queen. Black has superior alternatives:

a) 14...♙b8 (the idea here is to provoke weaknesses in White's kingside pawn-structure) 15 g3 ♙h3 16 ♖e1 ♗e5 (now this move is fine!) 17 ♗f3 ♗c6 18 ♗d4 (White can play on with 18 ♗g5!? ♙d7 19 ♗c2 h6 20 ♗f3 ♙a7 21 ♙f1

13 ♗d4 ♙xd4 14 ♙xg4 ♙e5 15 ♙f3 ♗a5 is fine for Black thanks to his active pieces, Greenfeld-Topalov, Burgas 1994.

13...♗d6

Romanov prepares to line up his queen and bishop along the h2-b8 diagonal.

14 ♗d4?! (D)

The knight centralization is inaccurate. 14 h3 is more challenging:

a) 14...♙h5 15 ♗h4 (White can win a pawn at the cost of loosening his position with 15 g4 ♙g6 16 g5 ♗e4 17 ♗xd5 but after 17...♗e7 Black has good compensation for the pawn because of White's ramshackle kingside) 15...♙b8 16 g3 ♙xe2 17 ♗xe2 favours White because of his control of the d4-square.

b) 14...♙e6 15 ♙d3 ♗e5 (this is an improvement over 15...♖ad8?! 16 ♗e2 ♗e4 17 ♗ed4 with an advantage for White thanks to his iron grip on the d4-square, Portisch-Ligterink, Wijk aan Zee 1985) 16 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 17 ♗e2 ♗g5 with a balanced game, as White's control of the d4-square is offset by Black's active pieces, in particular the well-placed black queen.

{the bishop shifts over to the long diagonal} 21...♖ac8 with a balanced game) 18...♞e5 19 ♞f3 ♞c6 20 ♞d4 1/2-1/2 Kantsler-Greenfeld, Israeli Ch, Jerusalem 1996.

b) 14...♞xd4! (the most precise move, eliminating White's centralized knight) 15 ♞xg4 (White must avoid 15 exd4? ♞xe2 16 ♞xe2 ♖fe8 with a slight advantage for Black; the transformed pawn-structure has reduced the scope of White's dark-squared bishop) 15...♞e5 16 f4 (16 h3 d4 17 exd4 ♞xd4 gives Black a slight pull due to his well-centralized pieces) 16...♞xc3 17 ♖xc3 ♖fe8 with equal chances, Quendro-Orlowski, 2nd Bundesliga 1993/4.

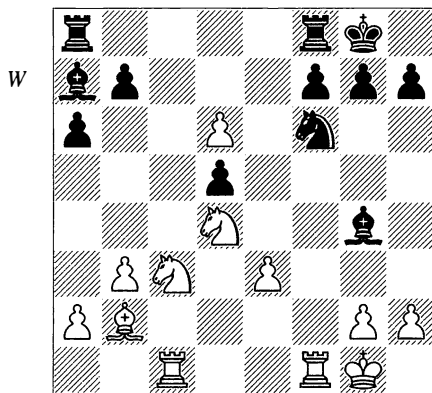
15 f4! ♞xe2

15...♞xd4 16 exd4 ♞xe2 17 fxg4 ♞xd1 18 exd6 ♞g4 19 ♖xf6 gxf6 transposes into the game continuation.

16 fxg4 ♞xd1

Black must capture the queen because after 16...♞xe5 17 ♞xe2 ♞xd4 18 exd4 ♞xd4+ 19 ♖f2 ♖xf2+ 20 ♖xf2 White has won a piece for two pawns.

17 exd6 ♞g4 (D)



18 ♖xf6!

This is the idea behind 15 f4!: Filippov sacrifices the exchange to shatter Black's pawn-structure and pocket the d5-pawn.

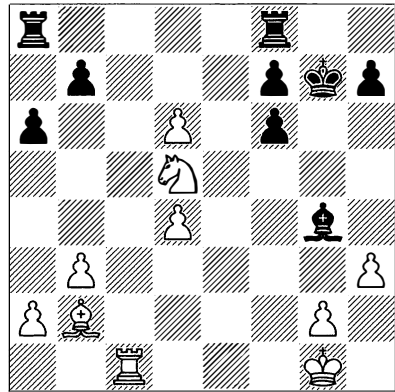
18...♞xd4 19 exd4 gxf6 20 ♞xd5

White's agile knight and powerful passed d-pawn are more effective than either of Black's housebound rooks.

20...♞g7 21 h3 (D)

21...♞f5

B



White's pieces also invade after 21...♞e6 22 ♞e7 ♖fd8 23 d5 ♞d7 (23...♖xd6 24 dxe6 fxe6 25 ♖c7 and White wins) 24 ♖c3 followed by ♖g3+ with a decisive advantage.

22 ♖f1 ♞d3 23 ♖f3 ♞e4 24 ♖g3+ ♞g6

Black's king is stuck in a box after 24...♞h8 25 ♞xf6 ♞g6 26 d5 ♞g7 27 h4 with crushing threats.

25 ♞b6

White could also play 25 d7 to prevent Black from activating his rook.

25...♖ae8

The endgame after 25...♖ac8 26 ♞xc8 ♖xc8 27 ♞a3 is an easy win for White thanks to his powerful d-pawns.

26 d5 (D)

The idea behind this move is to control the e6-square with the back pawn before advancing the front one to d7. White could also realize his advantage with the direct 26 d7, and then:

a) 26...♖e6 27 ♖c3 ♖xb6 28 ♞a3 ♖h8 (or 28...♖d8 29 ♖c8! ♞f5 {29...♖xd7 30 ♞f8+ mates} 30 ♖xd8 ♞xd7 31 ♖xd7 and White has won a piece) 29 ♖c8 ♞f5 30 ♖xh8 ♞xd7 31 ♖d8 ♞b5 32 d5 and White wins as the d-pawn rolls in.

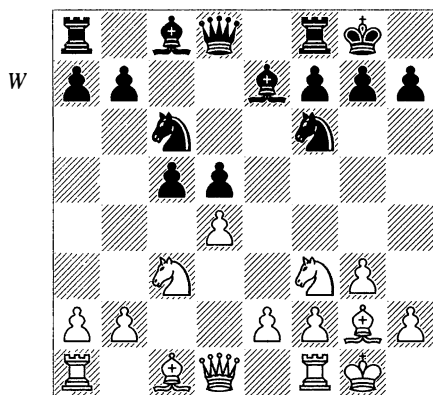
b) 26...♖e2 27 ♞a3 ♖d8 28 d5 ♞h8 29 ♞f1 ♖e5 30 ♞b2 ♞f5 31 ♞c4 with decisive threats along the a1-h8 diagonal.

26...♖e2

Positions similar to the game continuation arise after 26...♖e1+ 27 ♞h2 ♖e2 28 ♞c3 ♖d8 29 d7 ♖e7 30 ♖f3 ♖exd7 31 ♞xf6+ ♞h6 32 ♖f4! ♞b1 (after 32...♖xd5 33 ♖h4+ ♞h5 34 ♞xd8 ♖xd8 35 g4 White wins the pinned

Munich 1941) 11...♙e6 12 a3 ♙a5 13 ♘c5 ♜xd4 14 ♘xe6 fxe6 15 ♜h5+ g6 16 ♜e2 ♜d8 (16...e5 17 ♙h6 favours White because of his powerful pair of bishops) 17 ♜xe6 ♜d6 18 ♜e2 ♜d3?? (Black must settle for 18...0-0 19 ♙h6 with a clear plus for White, as the black king is caught in a draught) 19 ♙xc6+ 1-0 Arencibia-Bruzon, Cuban Ch, Santa Clara 2005. Black resigned in view of 19...♜xc6 20 ♜e5 winning a piece.

7 ♙g2 ♙e7 8 0-0 0-0 (D)



9 dxc5

White's main alternatives revolve around the question of where to develop his dark-squared bishop. Let's examine:

a) 9 ♙f4 (White continues his development, even though he does not have a direct threat) 9...♙e6 (9...♙g4 is another option) 10 dxc5 ♙xc5 11 ♜c1 ♜c8 12 ♘e5 ♜e7 is roughly equal, Smejkal-Chandler, Bundesliga 1996/7.

b) 9 ♙e3 c4 (Black transforms the pawn-structure into a hybrid form of the Swedish Variation {see the note to Black's 6th move}); this is a sensible idea because the position of White's e3-bishop in front of his e-pawn inhibits the natural e4 pawn-break) 10 ♘e5 h6!. This modest pawn move became popular after Kasparov used it to win a couple of games. The idea is to prevent White from applying pressure to the d5-pawn with ♙g5, while another benefit is the creation of a potential retreat-square for Black's light-squared bishop. Now:

b1) 11 ♜a4 a6!? (the solid 11...♙d7 was suggested by Aagaard and Lund to avoid White's

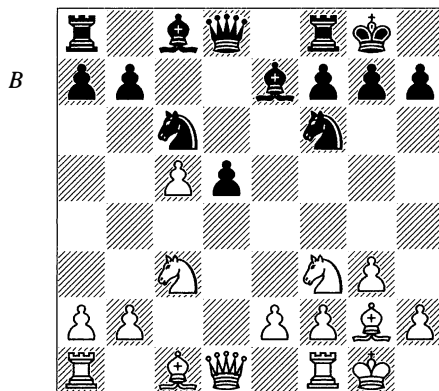
drawing option on move 13) 12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 b3 (White can bail out by 13 ♜xc6 ♙d7 14 ♜b7 ♜b8 15 ♜xa6 ♜a8 16 ♜b7 ♜b8 with a draw by repetition, but a half-point has never interested Larsen regardless of the opponent!) 13...♜b8! 14 bxc4 ♜b4 15 ♜d1 ♜xc4 with equal chances, Larsen-Kasparov, Brussels 1987.

b2) 11 h3 ♙b4 (this idea is also borrowed from the Swedish Variation; Black will pursue a light-square strategy centred around his control of the e4-square) 12 ♜a4 ♙xc3 13 bxc3 ♙f5 14 g4 ♙h7 15 ♙f4 (15 ♘xc6 ♜d7 is fine for Black) 15...♜e8 16 ♜ad1 a6 with equal chances, Hort-Kasparov, match (game 3), Cologne 1988. White's bishop-pair is offset by Black's firm grip on e4.

c) 9 b3 (this is another way for White to develop his dark-squared bishop) 9...♘e4 (another popular line is 9...♙g4 10 dxc5 ♙xc5 11 ♙b2 ♜e8 12 ♜c1 ♙f8 with a balanced game, as Black's active pieces compensate for his isolated d-pawn, Goletiani-Kraai, USA Ch, San Diego 2006) 10 ♙b2 ♙f6 11 ♘a4 (White relieves the pressure on his d4-pawn and protects his b2-bishop) 11...b6 (Black maintains the tension and opens a useful diagonal for his light-squared bishop) 12 ♜c1 ♙a6 13 dxc5 ♙xb2 14 ♘xb2 bxc5 with a dynamically balanced position in Ermenkov-I.Rogers, Reykjavik 2006. My database contains more than 80 games with this position; practice has shown that Black's piece activity compensates for his potentially vulnerable hanging centre pawns.

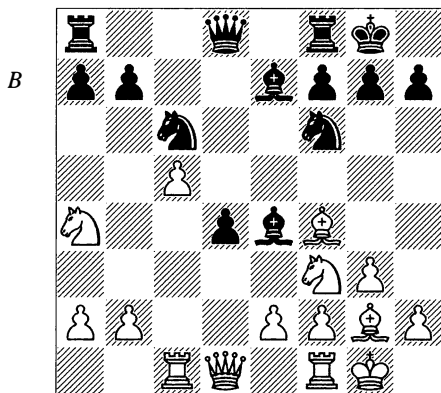
d) 9 ♙g5 is the subject of Game 5.

We now return to 9 dxc5 (D):



9...♙xc5

Black can also play the speculative pawn sacrifice 9...d4 (this line is known as the Tarrasch Gambit: instead of recapturing the pawn, Black drives the white knight to the edge of the board) 10 ♖a4 ♙f5 11 ♙f4 ♙e4 12 ♙c1 (D), and then:



a) 12...♙e8 13 a3 (13 ♙b3 ♖d5) 13...♙d5 14 b4 ♙ad8 15 ♖b2! (the knight heads for the powerful c4-square; this is more effective than 15 ♙e1 h6 16 b5 {16 ♖b2! still looks good for White} 16...♖a5 17 ♙c7 ♖b3 18 ♙xd8 ♙xd8 19 ♙c2 ♙xc2 20 ♙xc2 ♖xc5 with equality, Barsov-Magerramov, Abu Dhabi 1999) 15...g5! (Black must react quickly before White can play ♖c4 and home in on the d6-square) 16 ♙d2 g4 17 ♖e1 ♙xg2 18 ♖xg2 ♖e4 19 ♖c4 with a clear plus for White as Black has no compensation for his missing pawn.

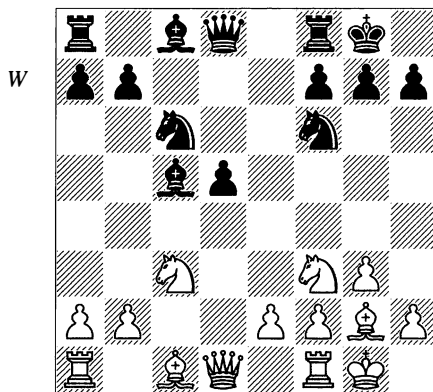
b) 12...♙d5 13 ♙b3 ♙xb3 (Black appears to be making a concession by exchanging queens, but White's doubled b-pawns will be difficult to mobilize and the alternative 13...♙h5 14 ♙fd1!? d3 15 ♙xd3 ♙xd3 16 exd3 looks promising for White as he already has two pawns for the exchange and Black's b7-pawn is loose) 14 axb3 ♙ad8 and then:

b1) 15 ♖e1!? ♙xg2 16 ♙xg2 ♖d7 (I think 16...♖d5!? is a better try) 17 ♖d3 ♙c8 18 b4 b5 19 cxb6 axb6, with a slight advantage for White, was a 1987 Kasparov suggestion in *ECO*. Now 20 b5 ♖a7 21 ♖e5 looks promising for White.

b2) 15 ♙fd1 ♙d5 16 ♖d2 ♙xg2 17 ♙xg2 ♖d5 (Zugić-Seitaj, Calvia Olympiad 2004) 18

♖c4!? with just a slight advantage for White, who must work on bringing his a4-knight back into the game.

We now return to 9...♙xc5 (D):

**10 ♙g5**

White pins the black knight and threatens to win the d5-pawn. This has replaced the older idea 10 ♖a4 ♙e7 11 ♙e3 (White aims for control of the c5-square) 11...♙e8 12 ♙c1 ♙g4 13 h3 ♙e6 (Black provokes h3 so that he can later pick up a tempo by attacking the pawn) 14 ♖d4 ♙d7 15 ♙h2 ♙ac8 with equal chances, Gelfand-Illscas, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

10...d4

Black should always strive for activity in the Tarrasch Defence. Too passive is 10...♙e6?! – 9 ♙g5 ♙e6?! 10 dxc5 ♙xc5; this line is covered in Game 5.

11 ♙xf6

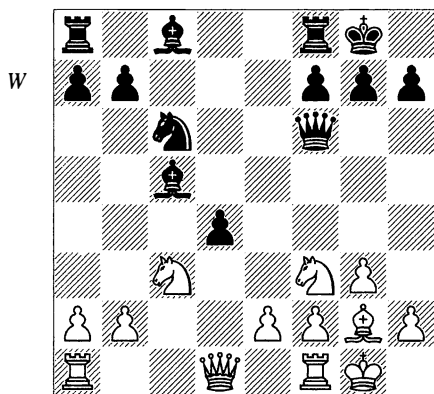
Other moves are too slow to cause Black any problems:

a) 11 ♖e4 ♙e7 12 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13 ♙c1 ♙e8 14 ♖e1 ♙f5! gives Black a comfortable game thanks to his superior development, Nikolić-Grishchuk, French Team Ch 2003.

b) 11 ♖a4 ♙e7 12 ♙c1 h6 13 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 14 ♖d2 ♙b8 15 ♖c5 ♙e8 with a balanced game, Larsen-Korchnoi, Bad Homburg 1998.

11...♙xf6 (D)**12 ♖d5**

Dutch GM Jan Timman introduced this move into tournament practice and his idea rapidly became popular. Black has no problems after 12 ♖e4 ♙e7 13 ♖xc5 ♙xc5 14 ♙c1 ♙b6 15



♖c2 h6 (Black snuffs out any attacking ideas involving ♘g5) 16 ♜fd1 ♙e6 17 b3 ♜ad8 with a solid position for Black as the d4-pawn has a cramping effect on White's position, Berkes-Graf, Leipzig 2002.

12...♛d8

The queen retreat back home is the most popular move here, but there are alternatives:

a) 12...♛d6 13 ♘d2 ♙f5 14 ♜c1 ♜ac8 (14...♜fe8!? looks reasonable, to control the e4-square) 15 ♗b3 (15 ♘e4!? ♙xe4 16 ♙xe4) 15...b6 with equal chances, Piket-Annakov, Internet rapid 1999.

b) 12...♜f5!? (Spanish GM Marc Narciso Dublan has employed this rarely-played move several times with great success; the idea is to drive the white knight away from d5 with a quick ...♜d8) 13 ♘d2 ♜d8 14 ♘f4 (White should avoid the faulty combination 14 ♘b3? ♜xd5 15 e4 dxe3 16 ♗xd5 exf2+ 17 ♖h1 ♙b6 with a clear plus for Black thanks to his strong f2-pawn and powerful bishop-pair, Sayed-Narciso Dublan, Dos Hermanas 2003) 14...♙d6 15 ♘d3 ♙e6 16 a3 ♜ac8 with a comfortable position for Black, Gomez Esteban-Narciso Dublan, Barcelona 2003. I anticipate further developments in this line.

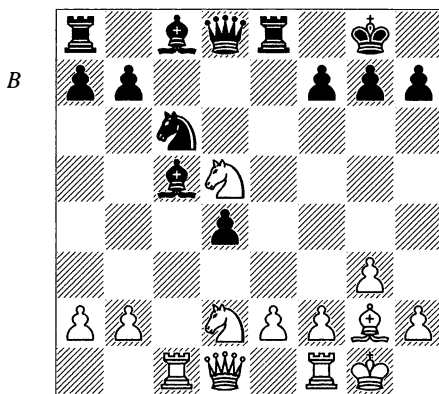
13 ♘d2

The knight heads for the queenside. White's plan is to use his minor pieces in combination with a rook on c1 and a queenside pawn advance to seize the initiative. Black will counter in the centre and on the kingside with moves such as ...♙e8 and ...♙g4 to target White's vulnerable e2-pawn.

13...♙e8

The rook development to the half-open file is Black's most popular choice here.

14 ♜c1 (D)



14...♙b6

The bishop keeps an eye on the d4-pawn. Alternatives:

a) 14...♙d6?! (the bishop is slightly misplaced here because it does not defend the d4-pawn) 15 ♘b3 ♙e5 (15...♙g4 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♙xe2 18 ♜fe1, with an advantage for White, was first played in Barlov-Cvitan, Smederevska Palanka 1984; the open position favours White because of his superior development) 16 ♘c5 ♜b8 17 ♗a4 and White has developed some queenside pressure because Black's dark-squared bishop has been lured away from that part of the board, Timman-Ivkov, Geneva 1977; this was the stem game for the 12 ♘d5 variation.

b) 14...♙f8 (this move has the benefit of keeping the white knight under surveillance) 15 ♘b3 ♙f5!? 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♜xe2 18 ♙f3 ♜e6 19 ♜fd1 ♜d6 with equal chances, Liebowitz-Batchelder, Berkeley 1981.

15 ♘c4

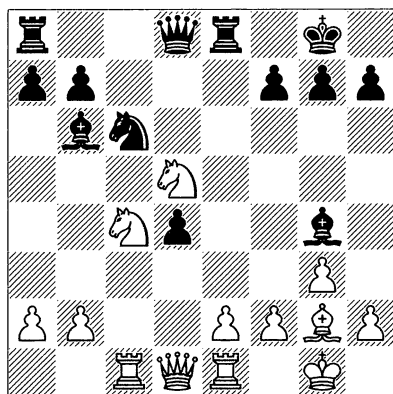
This is White's most aggressive plan: he drives away Black's dark-squared bishop.

15...♙g4

The bishop deployment to the g4-square is a very effective idea in positions with a half-open e-file and a black pawn on d4, as White must expend resources defending the e2-pawn.

16 ♜e1 (D)

B

**16...♗c5**

Retaining the dark-squared bishop gives Black more chances for active counterplay than the older 16...♗a5 17 ♖xa5 ♜xa5 18 b4 ♘xb4 (18...♜xa2? 19 ♖a1 ♜b2 20 ♜b1 ♜a2 {1/2-1/2 Tukmakov-Lerner, USSR Ch, Riga 1985}) 21 ♘c7! d3 22 ♗d5! ♜c2 23 ♘xa8 ♜xd1 24 ♜bxd1 with a decisive material advantage for White, Dreev-Martynov, USSR 1986) 19 ♜xd4 (this is more promising than 19 ♜d2 ♘c6 20 ♜xa5 ♘xa5 21 ♘c7 d3 {the chances are equal according to several sources}) 22 exd3 ♜xe1+ 23 ♜xe1 ♜d8 24 d4 with just a slight endgame advantage for White thanks to his passed d-pawn, Fiedler-Michaelsen, Bundesliga 2002/3) 19...♘xd5 20 ♜xg4 ♜ad8 21 ♜c4 b6 22 ♗f3 with a nagging advantage for White, Inarkiev-Potkin, Russian Ch, Elista 2001. The bishop is superior to the knight and Black must carefully defend his queenside pawns.

17 a3

White prepares to expand on the queenside.

17...a6

Black creates a queenside bolt-hole for his bishop. He can also complete his development by 17...♜c8 18 ♘f4 ♜g5 19 b4 ♗f8, with equal chances, Raetsky-Citak, Biel 2006.

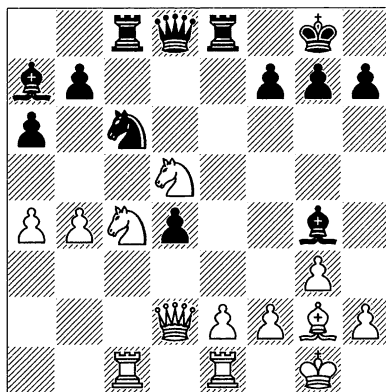
18 ♜d2

18 b4 ♗a7 19 ♘f4 (19 ♜d2 – 18 ♜d2 ♜c8 19 b4) 19...♜c8 20 ♜b3 ♗b8 was fine for Black in Smirin-Grishchuk, FIDE Knockout, New Delhi 2000. Black's minor pieces are well-coordinated and White has difficulties defending his e2-pawn.

18...♜c8 19 b4 ♗a7 20 a4 (D)

White can also infiltrate on the d6-square, but Black is able to hold the balance after 20 ♜f4 ♗e6 21 ♜d6 ♗b8 22 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 23 ♘db6 ♗a7 24 ♘a4 (so far this is Browne-Chandler, Bath TV 1983) 24...♗d5 with equal chances, as the exchange of light-squared bishops will extinguish White's queenside pressure.

B

**20...h5!?**

This is a new idea. The flank advance is aimed at softening up White's kingside pawn-structure. Alternatives:

a) 20...b5 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♘a3 ♜e5 23 ♜f4 d3 with sharp play, Berriot-Dieu, French corr. Ch 2000.

b) 20...♗e6 21 ♘f4 (21 e4 dxe3 22 ♘cxe3 ♘d4 is fine for Black because his dark-squared bishop has been activated) 21...♗f5!? (this is more in the spirit of the Tarrasch Defence than the complacent 21...♗xc4 22 ♜xc4 ♘e5 23 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 24 ♜c1 ♜d7 25 ♜c2 with an advantage for White because of his c-file control; the most recent example is Ftačnik-Berelovich, Bundesliga 2002/3) 22 b5 axb5 23 axb5 ♘e5 24 ♘a5 d3! with strong counterplay for Black. One interesting line is 25 ♘xb7 (25 e4? loses to 25...♜c2!! 26 ♜xc2 dxc2) 25...♗xf2+! 26 ♗xf2 ♜d4+ 27 e3 ♘g4+ 28 ♗g1 ♜xc1 29 ♜xc1 ♜xe3 (29...♘xe3 30 ♜f2 holds) 30 ♗h1 ♜e2! 31 ♘xe2 ♘f2+ 32 ♗g1 ♘h3+ 33 ♗h1 ♘f2+ with a draw by repetition.

21 ♘f4

21 b5 ♘e5 is fine for Black, so Evseev tries to increase the effectiveness of the pawn advance

by first manoeuvring his knight to the d3-square. The idea is to play b5 without allowing ... $\text{d}e5$ in response.

21...h4 22 $\text{d}d3$ $\text{e}e6$

Emelin decides to seek sanctuary in a position with opposite-coloured bishops. Instead, 22...h3 23 $\text{e}h1$ $\text{f}f6$ 24 b5 $\text{d}d8$ 25 $\text{b}b2$ leaves White with slight pressure on the queenside.

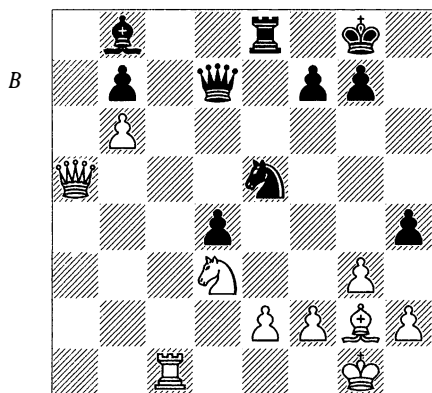
23 b5 axb5 24 axb5 $\text{e}e4$ 25 $\text{f}f4$

25 bxc6 b5! is fine for Black as he can follow up with ... $\text{e}b6$ -a5 to activate his dark-squared bishop.

25... $\text{d}e5$ 26 $\text{f}f4$

Another idea is 26 $\text{f}f4$!? $\text{d}d3$ (26... $\text{b}b6$ 27 $\text{d}d4$!? looks promising for White because of the vulnerable position of the black bishop) 27 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{b}b6$ 28 $\text{f}f5$ intending $\text{e}e5$ with attacking chances.

26... $\text{b}b6$ 27 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{d}d3$ 28 $\text{f}f5$ $\text{e}e4$ 29 b6 (D)



29...h3?

This advance is too reckless. 29... $\text{d}d3$ 30 $\text{e}e3$ $\text{f}f6$ is safer, although after 31 $\text{e}e4$ White has an advantage because of his more active bishop combined with the weakness of Black's b7-pawn.

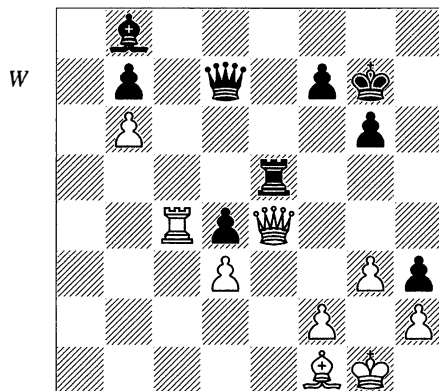
30 $\text{e}e4$!

Evseev overlooks the *intermezzo* 30 $\text{d}d3$! $\text{g}g4$ 31 $\text{b}b5$! with advantage as Black's b7-pawn will soon drop off.

30... $\text{d}d3$ 31 $\text{e}e3$ g6

Black prepares a safe house for his king on the g7-square. This will also enable him to defend the h3-pawn with ... $\text{h}h8$.

32 $\text{g}g5$ $\text{g}g7$ 33 $\text{h}h4$ $\text{h}h8$ 34 $\text{e}e4$ $\text{h}h5$ 35 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{e}e5$ (D)



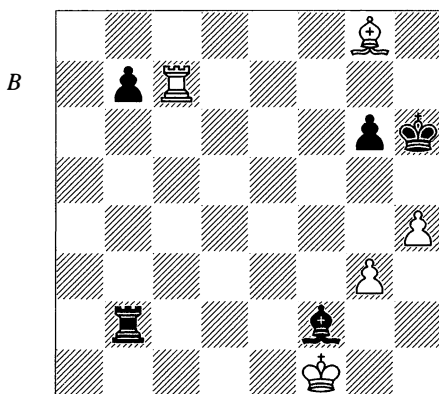
36 $\text{f}f4$!

White's advantage quickly evaporates after the exchange of queens. 36 $\text{f}f4$! $\text{e}e7$ 37 $\text{g}g4$ is stronger, with a material advantage.

36... $\text{f}f4$ 37 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{e}e6$ 38 $\text{h}h3$ $\text{h}h6$ 39 $\text{d}d7$ $\text{a}a7$ 40 d4 $\text{f}f6$ 41 $\text{e}e1$ $\text{b}b4$ 42 $\text{f}f7$

White gives up the d-pawn because 42 d5? $\text{h}h2$ picks up the f2-pawn.

42... $\text{e}e4$ 43 $\text{e}e4$ $\text{g}g5$ 44 h4+ $\text{h}h6$ 45 $\text{e}e7$ $\text{b}b2$ 46 $\text{e}e8$ $\text{e}e2$ + 47 $\text{f}f1$ (D)



47... $\text{h}h5$

Now the players consent to a repetition of moves. Black avoids the disastrous 47... $\text{e}e3$? 48 $\text{h}h7$ #, or 47... $\text{g}g5$? 48 $\text{h}h7$ + $\text{g}g6$ 49 h5+ $\text{f}f5$ 50 $\text{f}f7$ + $\text{g}g4$ 51 $\text{f}f2$, when White has won a piece.

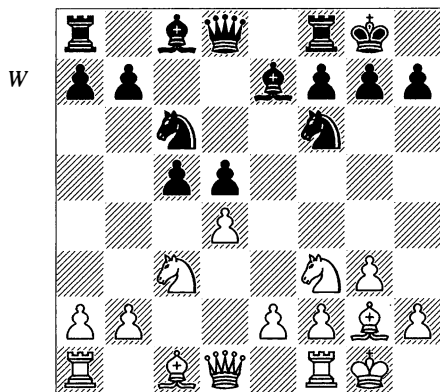
48 $\text{e}e6$ $\text{h}h6$ 49 $\text{e}e8$ 1/2-1/2

Game 5 [D34]

Sergei Ivanov – Aleksei Lugovoi

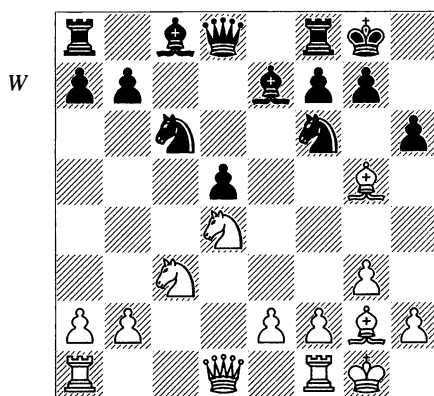
St Petersburg Ch 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♘f3
 ♙c6 6 g3 ♙f6 7 ♖g2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 (D)



Black can build up along the b-file) 12...♗a5 brings us to a position that has been reached over 300 times in practice. A detailed examination of these lines is beyond the scope of this book, but it should be noted that White can choose between 13 ♗d2, 13 ♗c2 and 13 ♘a4, with sharp play in all cases.

10 ♘xd4 h6 (D)



For comments on the moves up to here, see Game 4.

9 ♖g5

This is the most popular choice. White's 9th-move alternatives were discussed in Game 4.

9...cxd4

The pawn exchange is the modern preference. Alternatives:

a) 9...♗e6 (this move has fallen out of favour because White has the option of forcing a favourable endgame) 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 11 ♗xf6 (11 ♖c1 is also possible) 11...♗xf6 12 ♘xd5 ♗xb2 13 ♘c7 ♗ad8 14 ♗c1 ♗xc1 15 ♖axc1 b6 16 ♘xe6 fxe6 17 e3 (this prevents Black from playing the simplifying ...♘d4) 17...h6 18 ♖c4 with a slight plus for White, Savanović-Kosić, Bar 2003. This position has arisen more than 40 times in practice; White has good chances to exploit the weakness of Black's isolated e6-pawn, despite the opposite-coloured bishops.

b) 9...c4 (Black releases the central tension and establishes a queenside pawn-majority; the idea is similar to the hybrid form of the Swedish Variation discussed in note 'b' to White's 9th move in Game 4) 10 ♘e5 ♗e6 11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 b3 (White challenges the c4-pawn before

11 ♗e3

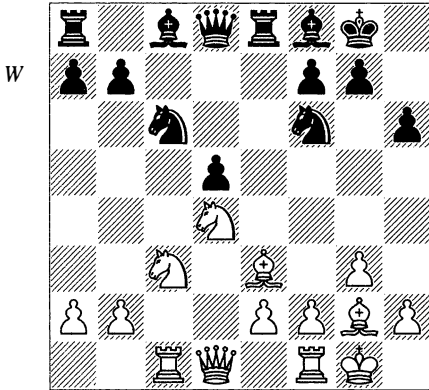
Alternatives:

a) 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♘b3 (White compels the d5-pawn to advance, but Black has the bishop-pair and he can quickly develop his pieces) 12...d4 13 ♘e4 ♗e7 14 ♖c1 ♗b6 15 ♘ec5 ♗d8 with equal chances, Seirawan-Kasparov, Nikšić 1983.

b) 11 ♗f4 ♗g4 12 h3 ♗h5?! (12...♗e6 is the most popular continuation here) 13 ♖c1! ♗e8 (13...♗d7 14 ♗a4 ♗ac8 15 ♗fd1 with an advantage for White in N.Kosintseva-L.Mkrtchian, North Urals Cup, Krasnoturinsk 2006; Black's light-squared bishop is unable to assist with the defence of the d5-pawn) 14 ♗a4 ♗b6 15 ♘db5 ♗ac8 16 ♗e3 d4 17 ♘xd4 ♗c5 18 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 19 ♘xc6 ♗xe3 (V.Popov-Potkin, Pardubice 2000) 20 fxe3! ♗xe3+ (20...bxc6 21 ♗d4 and White wins) 21 ♗h2 bxc6 22 ♗xc6 with a decisive material advantage for White.

11...♖e8 12 ♖c1

This is the most logical move: White occupies the open c-file.

12...♙f8 (D)**13 ♖a4**

White has a wide choice of reasonable moves here:

a) 13 a3 ♙g4 (Black coaxes White's h-pawn forward to create a target for his minor pieces) 14 h3 ♙e6 (14...♙d7?! 15 ♖b3! ♖a5 16 ♖a2 saddles Black with a weak d5-pawn) 15 ♖xc6 bxc6 16 ♙d4 ♖h7 (16...♙d7 17 ♖d3 ♖h7 18 ♙e3 ♙d6 19 ♖fd1 ♙e6 20 b4 favours White because of his prospects of occupying the c5-square, Karpov-Illescas, Leon 1993) 17 ♖a4 ♖d7 18 h4 ♙f5 with equal chances, Gelfand-Grishchuk, Biel 2001.

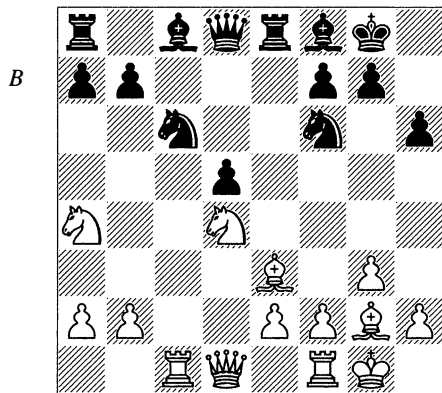
b) 13 ♖b3 (White immediately gangs up on the d5-pawn) 13...♙e6 14 ♙c5 ♙xc5 (the pawn sacrifice 14...d4?! 15 ♙xc6 bxc6 16 ♖xd4 ♙xc5 17 ♖xc5 favours White, Rustemov-Lastin, Moscow 2004) 15 ♖xc5 ♖c8 (15...♖e7 16 ♖xe6 fxe6 17 e4 with a slight advantage for White due to his strong light-squared bishop, Law-Nunn, British Ch, Clacton-on-Sea 1974; 15...♖b6!? also looks reasonable) 16 ♖xe6 fxe6 17 e3 (so far this is Kramnik-Sadler, Amber rapid, Monte Carlo 1998) 17...♖b6 with a comfortable position for Black.

c) 13 ♖a4 (White's queen vacates the d-file to make way for a rook) 13...♖a5 14 ♖cd1 ♙d7 15 ♖c2 ♖c8 16 ♖b1 (White appears to be on the retreat, but Black has problems defending the d5-pawn) 16...♖c4 17 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 18 ♙xd5

♙h3! with sharp play, Yaremchishin-Nadanian, Skellefteå 1994.

d) 13 ♖xc6 (this is White's most popular choice) 13...bxc6 14 ♖a4 ♙d7 15 ♙c5 (White follows the time-tested plan in such positions: exchange dark-squared bishops and plant a knight on c5) 15...♙xc5 16 ♖xc5 ♙g4 (Black obtains counterplay versus the e2-pawn) 17 ♖e1 ♖a5 18 h3 ♙f5 19 ♖d4! ♖ab8 20 a3 ♖b6! (it is desirable to pin the white knight so that Black can make use of the e4-square; 20...♖b5 21 b3 was first played in the well-known game Kasparov-Illescas, Linares 1994; Black should continue 21...a5! 22 ♖f1 ♖e4 with equal chances, Vera-H.Salazar, Moscow Olympiad 1994) 21 b3 (21 b4 a5 is equal, Borovikov-Bezgodov, Alushta 1999) 21...♖e4! 22 ♙xe4 ♖xe4 (22...dxe4 23 g4 ♙e6 with sharp play, Filippov-Bezgodov, Petropavlovsk 1999) 23 ♖c3 ♖e7 with equal chances. The most important point for Black to remember in these lines is to keep his pieces active and avoid passive defence.

We now return to 13 ♖a4 (D):

**13...♙d7**

Black completes his development. Alternatives:

a) 13...♖e5?! 14 ♖b5 ♖c4 (the knight is unstable here) 15 ♙d4 ♙g4 16 ♖ac3 favours White, Sharif-Akopian, Abu Dhabi 2000.

b) 13...♖g4 14 ♖xc6 bxc6 15 ♙c5 ♙xc5 (15...♙a6 16 ♖e1 ♖f6 17 ♙d4 ♖g6 18 h3 ♖e5 19 ♖c5 ♙xc5 20 ♖xc5 with a clear plus for White, who has exposed the weaknesses in

Black's pawn-structure, Szuhaneck-Neelakan-tan, Calcutta 1999) 16 ♖xc5 ♜f6 17 h3 ♖e5 18 e4 ♜b8 19 b3 ♜b5 20 exd5 cxd5 21 ♜e1! g5 (Timman-Gligorić, Nikšić 1978) and now I think 22 ♜e3! is the most accurate move, giving White a crushing advantage as Black has no good defence to various threats such as ♜e2.

c) 13... ♜a5 14 ♖xc6 bxc6 15 ♜xc6! ♔d7 16 ♔d2 ♔b4 (16... ♜b5 17 ♜xf6 gxf6 18 ♖c3 ♜xb2 19 ♖xd5 was first played in Strauss-King, British Ch, Brighton 1984; a dozen or so subsequent games have confirmed that White has an extremely dangerous attack for a small material investment) 17 ♜c5 ♔xa4 (17... ♜xa4 18 ♜xa4 ♔xa4 19 ♔xb4 ♜xe2 20 b3 ♔d7 21 ♜a1 with the better endgame for White, whose idea is to expel the black rook with ♔f1 and then exploit the bishop-pair, Ribli-Barle, Portorož/Ljubljana 1985) 18 ♜xa5 ♔xd1 19 ♔xb4 ♔xe2 20 ♜e1 a6 (Jurka-Antoshik, Czech Extraliga 1995/6) 21 ♔f1!? (this move was suggested by Khalifman; too hasty is 21 ♔xd5?! ♖xd5 22 ♜xd5 ♔c4 with drawing chances for Black because of the opposite-coloured bishops) 21... ♔xf1 22 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 23 ♔xf1 (White has a slight endgame plus according to Khalifman) 23... ♜b8 24 a3 ♜b6 25 f3 with a comfortable advantage for White. The white bishop dominates the black knight and White can quickly centralize his king and target Black's two isolated pawns.

14 ♖c5 ♔xc5

This is the safest reply. Other moves allow White to retain an advantage:

a) 14... ♖a5?! (the knight is offside here) 15 b3 ♜c8 16 ♖xd7 ♜xd7 17 ♜d3 favours White because of his bishop-pair, Kramnik-Illescas, Linares 1994.

b) 14... ♖xd4 15 ♔xd4 ♔c6 16 e3 (16 ♜d3!?) 16... ♖e4 17 ♜g4 is also a little better for White, Nguyen-Malysheva, Budapest 2004. White will follow up with ♜fd1 to target Black's isolated d5-pawn.

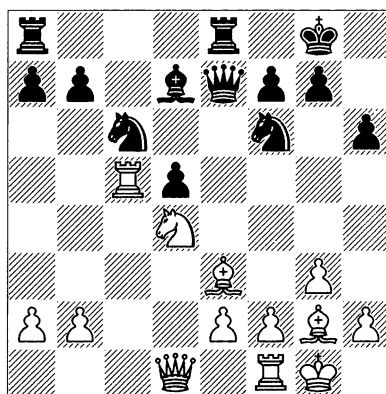
15 ♜xc5 ♜e7 (D)

The game Veingold-Kiik, Savonlinna 1996 was agreed drawn here, but of course the battle is just beginning!

16 ♜c1

This move was suggested by Khalifman. However, Black appears to have adequate

W



resources, so note 'b' below may be White's best try to secure an advantage:

a) 16 ♜c1 ♖g4! 17 ♜c3 ♖xe3 18 ♜xe3 ♜b4 with equal chances, Lingnau-Asendorf, Bad Zwischenahn 2002.

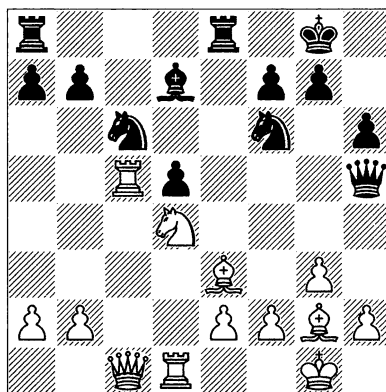
b) 16 ♖xc6!? bxc6 (16... ♔xc6 17 ♜d4 favours White) 17 ♜c2 ♖e4 18 ♜d4 a5 19 ♜fc1 with a slight advantage for White thanks to his bishop-pair and superior pawn-structure. This idea awaits a practical trial.

16... ♜e5!

Lugovoi repositions his queen for a kingside attack. The e5-square is an important stepping-stone to the kingside for Black's pieces in many isolated queen's pawn (IQP) positions.

17 ♔d1 ♜h5 (D)

W



The black queen is very active here. The immediate threat is to ruin White's pawn-structure with ... ♖g4.

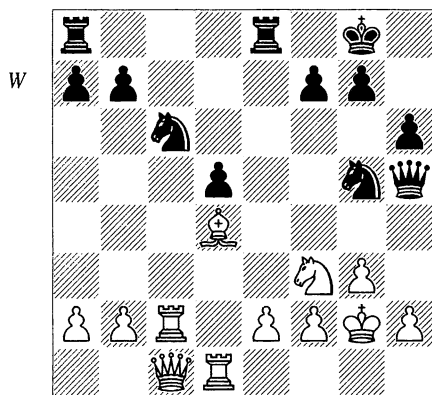
18 ♖f3

Another idea is to keep Black's pieces away from the sensitive g4- and e4- squares with 18 f3!? ♖xd4 (stronger than 18... ♖e5 19 ♖f2 ♖ae8 20 e3 with a slight structural advantage for White) 19 ♖xd4 ♗e5 20 ♖c3 ♖ac8. Black is fine here because he has strong pressure along the e-file, and his isolated d5-pawn is easy to defend.

18... ♖h3 19 ♖d4

Black has succeeded in creating some kingside threats; one of the most important features of the position is the contrast in queen activity. Note that 19 ♖h1 ♖f5 20 ♖g2 ♖e4!? neutralizes the power of White's g2-bishop and enables Black to continue his kingside build-up.

19... ♖e4 20 ♖c2 ♖xg2 21 ♗xg2 ♖g5 (D)



22 ♖xg5

White reluctantly opens the h-file for Black's pieces, but the alternatives are risky; for example:

a) 22 ♖e3?? ♗h3+ 23 ♖h1 ♖xf3 24 exf3 ♖e5 and Black wins thanks to the poor position of the white queen.

b) 22 ♗d2 ♖e4 23 ♗c3 (23 ♖xg5?? ♖xd4 costs White a piece) 23... ♖ae8 with strong pressure along the e-file.

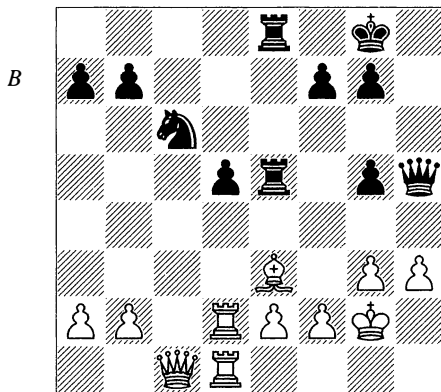
22... hxc5

All but one set of minor pieces have been exchanged and Black still has an isolated d5-pawn, yet it is White who is struggling to equalize. White's dark-squared bishop has nothing to attack and Black can generate strong threats by doubling rooks along the e-file.

23 ♖e3 ♖e5

Another reasonable plan for Black is the direct 23...g4!? 24 ♖g1 (24 ♖cd2 ♖e5 {with the idea of ...♗h3+ and ...♖h5 with a mating-net} 25 ♖g1 ♖ae8 with an advantage for Black as the threat of ...d4 is in the air) 24... ♖e5 25 ♖f4 ♖e6 with a slight advantage for Black.

24 h3 ♖ae8 25 ♖cd2 (D)



25... ♖xe3

Black could also prepare the exchange sacrifice with 25...g4!? 26 hxc4 ♗xc4 27 ♖h1 ♖xe3 28 fxe3 ♗e4+, when Black has a promising attack for a small material investment.

26 fxe3 ♖xe3 27 ♖f1 g4 28 hxc4

White removes the dangerous g4-pawn. Black is able to sift in after 28 h4 ♗e5 29 ♖f4 ♖xe2+ 30 ♖xe2 ♗xe2+ 31 ♖f2 ♗e4+ 32 ♖h2 ♖d4, when White's position is hopeless because of the weakness of the f3-square.

28... ♗xc4 29 ♖f3 ♖e6?

Black should reserve this square for his queen. The optimal piece set-up is achieved after 29... ♖e5 30 ♖f4 ♗e6 31 ♗f1 d4 with roughly equal chances – Black's major pieces are well-placed for both attack and defence.

30 ♗d1 d4 31 ♖f4 ♗g5 32 ♖d3

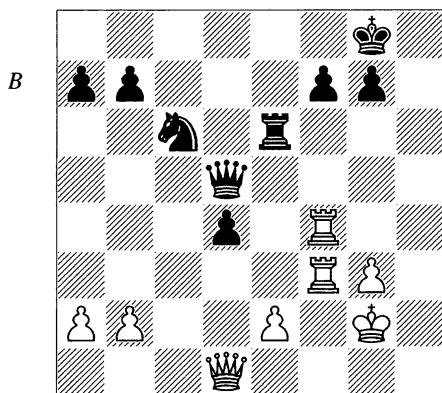
Black hangs on after 32 ♗b3 ♗e7 33 ♗f3 ♖e3 34 ♗g4 g6 with sufficient compensation for the exchange. It is difficult for White to create an attack along the f-file with his rooks because of the weakness of his e2-pawn.

32... ♗d5+

Another attacking idea is 32... ♗e5!? 33 ♖f1 g5! 34 ♖f2 ♗h8 35 ♖e1 (35 ♖g2? ♖h6 36 ♗g1

♖e5 gives Black a crushing attack) 35...♗h1+ 36 ♘d2 ♖e4 37 ♗a4 with roughly equal prospects, as White must focus on keeping his king safe and it will be difficult for him to exploit his slight material advantage.

33 ♜df3 (D)



33...g5?!

An ambitious and reckless pawn-thrust! Black can maintain equality with 33...♘e5 34 ♜xd4 ♖c6 35 ♜d8+ ♘h7 36 ♖b1+ ♜g6 (not 36...g6?? 37 ♖h1+ ♘g7 38 ♖h8#) 37 ♖f5 ♘xf3 38 ♖h5+ (38 exf3 ♖c4 is equal) 38...♜h6 39 ♖f5+ ♜g6 (39...♖g6 40 ♖xg6+ ♜xg6 41 exf3 is a drawn rook endgame) 40 ♖h5+ with a draw by repetition.

34 ♜xf7?

White can turn the tables by 34 e4! ♖e5 (34...♜xe4 35 ♜xf7 favours White) 35 ♜f5 ♖xe4 36 ♜xg5+ ♘f8 37 ♜g4! with favourable complications. Black has insufficient compensation for the exchange.

34...♘e5!

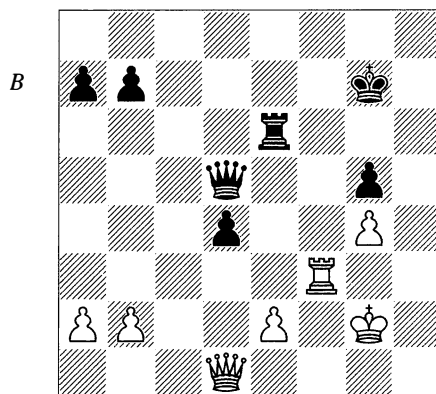
The knight fork is more challenging than 34...g4 35 ♜f8+ ♘g7 (not 35...♘h7?? 36 ♖h1+ ♜h6 37 ♜f7+ ♘g8 38 ♖xh6 and White wins) 36 ♜f7+ ♘g8 (36...♘g6?? loses to 37 ♖d3+ ♖e4 38 ♖xe4+ ♜xe4 39 ♜f6+ ♘g5 40 ♘f2) 37 ♜f8+ ♘g7 with a draw by repetition.

35 ♜f8+ ♘g7 36 g4?

Pawns cannot move backwards and this advance only makes the g-pawn more difficult to

defend. White should play 36 ♘g1 with equal chances.

36...♘xf3 37 ♜xf3 (D)



37...♜e4

Black can force a favourable queen endgame with 37...♜e3 38 ♘f2 ♖e5 39 ♜xe3 (after 39 ♖d2 ♖h2+ 40 ♘e1 ♖g1+ 41 ♜f1 ♖xg4 Black wins a pawn) 39...♖xe3+ 40 ♘g2 ♖f4 41 ♘h3 ♖f2! (this position is a good example of why White should have kept his g-pawn back on the g3-square) 42 ♖c2 ♖h4+ 43 ♘g2 ♖xg4+ 44 ♘f2 ♖f4+ 45 ♘e1 ♘h6 and Black should win the pawn-up endgame with careful play.

38 ♖c2 ♖e5?

There is no reason to avoid the straightforward 38...♜xg4+! 39 ♘f2 ♜e4 40 ♖c8 ♘g6, when Black has a solid extra pawn.

39 ♘f2 ♜e3?

Black can still keep an advantage with the patient 39...♖e7!.

40 ♖c4

Another path to equality is 40 ♜f5!? ♖e7 (after 40...♖h2+?? 41 ♘e1 ♖g3+ 42 ♘d2 White switches over to the attack) 41 ♜d5 ♜h3 (not 41...♖f7? 42 ♖f5 and White has winning chances) 42 ♘g2 ♜e3 with a repetition.

40...♜xf3+ 41 exf3 ♖e3+ 42 ♘g2 ♘f6 43 ♖d5 ♖e2+ 44 ♘h3 1/2-1/2

Black cannot escape the checks after 44...d3 45 ♖d6+ ♘f7 46 ♖d7+ ♘f6 47 ♖d6+ with a draw by repetition.

3 Exchange and Blackburne Variations

Introduction

The Exchange Variation is characterized by the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5. The early swap of White's c-pawn for Black's e-pawn gives White an extra centre pawn at the cost of opening the e-file and the c8-h3 diagonal for Black's pieces. An assessment of the prospects for Black's light-squared bishop is often a good indicator as to the overall health of Black's position in many Queen's Gambit Declined positions, and the Exchange Variation is no exception. The paradox of the Exchange Variation is that White voluntarily opens a diagonal for Black's light-squared bishop, yet this piece often has difficulty finding a useful role during the early stages of the game. It turns out that the 'Carlsbad' structure of white pawns on e3 and d4 opposing black pawns on d5 and c6 is the cause of the mobility challenge for Black's light-squared bishop. One of White's primary goals is to restrict the early development of Black's light-squared bishop and to prevent Black from exchanging this piece for one of the white knights.

The line named the 'Exchange Variation' can be a rather dull line in some openings, but in the QGD it is a variation rich in strategic content and many of the world's strongest grandmasters are willing to play either side of this line. White has two distinct development schemes (between which he generally chooses after the moves 5 ♗g5 c6 6 ♖c2 ♗e7 7 e3 ♗bd7 8 ♗d3 0-0, though there are a number of possible move-orders, each with their subtleties):

- Develop with ♗ge2: White can either castle queenside and play for an all-out kingside attack, or he can castle kingside and carefully prepare the central pawn advance f3 and e4.
- Develop with ♗f3: White can focus on building up in the centre and restricting Black's development, or he can pursue the classic minority attack with b4-b5 and bxc6 to saddle Black with a backward c-pawn along the half-open c-file.

The Blackburne Variation arises after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♗f6 4 ♗f3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4. White's dark-squared bishop cuts a swathe through the centre of the board. One of the goals of the bishop development to f4 (as opposed to g5) is to avoid the early piece exchanges which occur in several QGD lines such as the Lasker and Classical Defences. Another benefit is that in some of the near-symmetrical positions that may arise, White's f4-bishop has been developed outside the pawn-chain and has more scope than Black's c8-bishop. A potential drawback of the Blackburne Variation is that White's dark-squared bishop does not exert any indirect pressure on Black's d5-pawn. This allows Black to play the freeing ...c5 pawn-break without having to worry about a white bishop on g5 capturing a black knight on f6 (thus the main line continues 5...0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5). The popularity of the Blackburne Variation has steadily increased during the past decade or so, as many players are attracted to the sharp, dynamic positions which typically arise from this variation.

The Games

Game 6 (Rowson-Adly) is an Exchange Variation featuring the sharp continuation 9 ♗ge2 ♗e8 10 0-0-0. The players castle on opposite wings and Adly flings his queenside pawns forward. Rowson

counters in the centre and sacrifices a pawn for open lines. Black undertakes an ill-advised queen excursion on the kingside and the lady quickly becomes trapped on the edge of the board. White wins the queen and has a commanding material advantage, but a series of tactical blunders leaves the result in doubt for several moves. Adly commits the last mistake and Rowson is able to pull out a victory in one of the most entertaining games of 2006.

In **Game 7** (Radjabov-Bruzon), Radjabov plays the Exchange Variation with the more conservative continuation 9 ♖f3 ♜e8 10 0-0. White employs a minority attack and Black counters with an early ...b5!? to stop the advance of White's queenside pawns. A central advance leads to the exchange of queens and White is able to strike first by targeting Black's vulnerable b5-pawn. Radjabov overlooks the most precise continuation and Bruzon misses a subtle defensive resource. White wins a pawn, and is able to exploit a pin to simplify into an easily-won endgame.

Game 8 (Carlsen-Short) features a Blackburne Variation with 8 cxd5 and after 8...♗xd5 9 ♗xd5 exd5 we have a typical IQP position. Short attempts to liquidate his d-pawn with an early ...d4; Carlsen responds with e4 and counters Black's passed d4-pawn by creating a kingside pawn-roller. The players follow established theory for many moves until Short varies with a new idea. He commits an inaccuracy several moves later and Carlsen is able to win a pawn and force a highly favourable endgame. Carlsen's technique is more than up to the task and he finishes off the game in a very stylish manner.

In **Game 9** (Mamedyarov-Tregubov), Mamedyarov varies with the popular 8 ♖c2. After 8...♗c6 9 a3 ♖a5 10 0-0-0 the position of the kings on opposite wings forecasts a fierce battle as the players head for one of the sharpest lines of the entire variation. Black allows his kingside pawn-structure to become mangled in return for piece activity. Tregubov plays a new idea on move 20 and Mamedyarov responds energetically. Tregubov overlooks an unusual tactical idea and Mamedyarov is able to simplify into an endgame in which he has a protected passed d-pawn. In the end, White's superior pawn-structure wins out. The notes to this game are more detailed than is typical for a *Chess Explained* book because I wanted to do justice to this interesting and topical main line of the Blackburne Variation.

Game 6 [D36]

Jonathan Rowson – Ahmed Adly

Turin Olympiad 2006

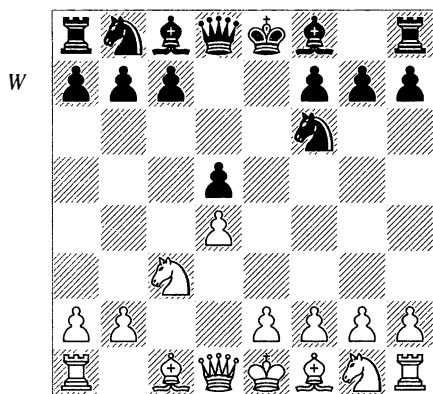
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3

Black has more options after 3 cxd5 exd5 4 ♗c3 c6 (intending ...♗f5; 4...♗f6 – 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5) 5 ♗f3 ♗f5 (Black arrives first on the critical b1-h7 diagonal) 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 (Black avoids the pin on his king's knight) 7 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 8 e3 ♗f6 9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♖xd3 ♗bd7 11 0-0 0-0 with equal chances, C.Toth-Kramnik, Rio de Janeiro 1991, and many other games; the exchange of both sets of bishops has eased Black's defensive task.

3...♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5 (D)

The alternative recapture 4...♗xd5 5 e4 ♗xc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♗f3 transposes into a line of the Semi-Tarrasch Defence; see Game 15 of Chapter 5 for coverage.

The QGD Exchange Variation is a very important opening, particularly as a good understanding of the characteristic pawn-structures and piece deployments can serve as a helpful benchmark for evaluating many related positions. The Exchange Variation appears to violate several generally accepted chess principles because White voluntarily:



- Releases the tension in the centre;
- Exchanges a pawn on the fourth rank for a black pawn on the third rank;
- Opens the c8-h3 diagonal for Black's light-squared bishop.

The justification for these 'rule infractions' is as follows:

- White obtains an extra centre pawn and he relieves himself of the burden of having to defend the c4-pawn. Black no longer has the option of exchanging his d5-pawn for White's c4-pawn and following up with the ...c5 or ...e5 pawn-breaks.
- White has the more elastic pawn-structure because in some lines he can build an imposing pawn-centre with f3 followed by e4. Black's pawn-structure is less flexible because the ...c5 pawn-break can be met by dxc5, leaving Black with an isolated d5-pawn.
- White is not overly concerned with opening the c8-h3 diagonal because there are some tactical problems for Black if he develops his light-squared bishop too early; see note 'c' to Black's 6th move.

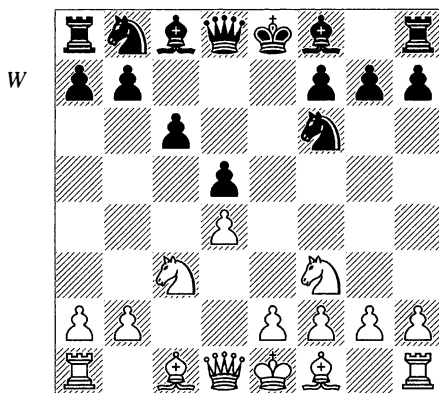
5 ♖g5

The alternatives are harmless because they allow Black to develop his light-squared bishop smoothly. Let's examine:

a) 5 ♖f4 (the drawback of this move is that it fails to put pressure on Black's kingside) 5...c6 6 e3 ♖f5 7 ♗ge2 (7 ♖d3 ♖xd3 8 ♖xd3 ♖d6 is also harmless for Black) 7...♖b6!? 8 ♖d2 ♖bd7 9 ♗g3 ♖g6 10 ♖e2 ♖e7 11 0-0 0-0 with equal chances, Riazantsev-Malakhov, Russian Ch,

Elista 2001. Black has successfully deployed his light-squared bishop to an active post.

b) 5 ♗f3 (this inaccurate move is often seen at club level, or else the position arises from move-orders such as 1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗c3) 5...c6 (D) and now:



b1) 6 ♖c2 ♗a6 7 a3 ♗c7 8 ♖g5 g6!? (to control the f5-square) 9 e3 ♖f5 10 ♖d3 ♖xd3 11 ♖xd3 ♖e7 12 0-0 0-0 13 b4 ♗e4 14 ♖f4 ♗xc3 15 ♖xc7 (15 ♖xc3? ♖d6 16 ♖xd6 ♗b5! 17 ♖b3 ♗xd6 with a slight advantage for Black according to Kasparov in his *Informator* 48 notes, Portisch-Kasparov, Skellefteå 1989) 15...♖xc7 16 ♖xc3 1/2-1/2 Vaganian-Kasparov, Horgen 1995.

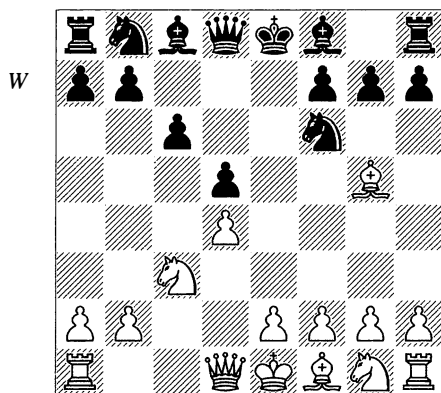
b2) 6 ♖g5 h6! (this move is usually inaccurate in the Exchange Variation because it weakens Black's control over the g6-square, but this is a good moment to kick the bishop because Black is able to develop his light-squared bishop and he can seize the initiative with a timely ...g5 pawn advance) 7 ♖h4 ♖f5 8 ♖b3 g5 9 ♖g3 (9 ♖xb7?! gxh4 10 ♖xa8 ♖b6 11 ♗a4? {11 0-0-0} 11...♖b4+ 12 ♗d1 ♖c7 {K.Allen-J.Verdier, IECC e-mail 1999} 13 a3 0-0 14 axb4 ♗a6 15 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 and the queen is boss here because White's king is hopelessly exposed) 9...♖b6 10 ♗d2 (10 ♖xb6 axb6 opens the a-file for the black rook) 10...♗bd7 11 e3 ♖xb3 12 ♗xb3 ♗e4 13 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 14 ♗d2 ♖g6 with equal chances, Vallejo Pons-Shirov, Amber rapid, Monte Carlo 2004.

White must refrain from playing an early ♗f3 if he wishes to employ the Exchange

Variation because the premature knight development gives Black extra freedom to develop his light-squared bishop.

5...c6 (D)

Black bolsters his d5-pawn and 'threatens' to play ... f5 .



6 e3

White indirectly discourages ... f5 . The more direct approach is 6 Wc2 Qa6! ? (Black usually transposes into the game continuation with 6... e7 7 e3 Qbd7 8 d3 – 6 e3 Qbd7 7 d3 e7 8 Wc2) 7 e3 Qb4 8 Wd2 f5 9 Wc1 a5 (Black stakes out some turf to prevent White from rapidly expanding on the queenside with a3 and b4) 10 a3 Qa6 11 Qge2 h6 12 f4 Qd7 13 Qg3 e6 (intending ...g5 to harass White's dark-squared bishop) 14 e4 Qb6 15 We3! ? (15 exd5 Qxd5 with a balanced game, Kasparov-Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 1999) 15...dxe4 (not 15...g5? losing to 16 e5 f6 17 exd5, while after 15... e7 16 Qh5 White targets the vulnerable g7-pawn) 16 Qgxe4 with a promising attack for White as he can increase the kingside pressure with a timely Wg3 .

6...Qbd7

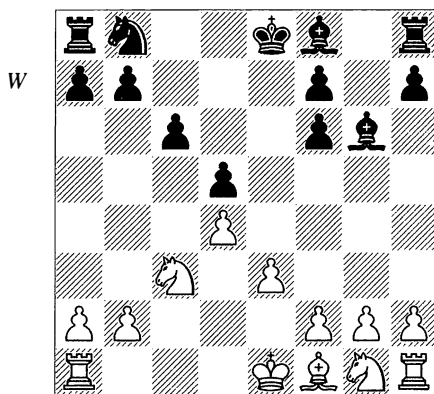
Black has several alternatives in this position:

a) 6... e7 7 d3 Qbd7 – 6... Qbd7 7 d3 e7 .

b) 6... Wb6 7 Wd2 Qe4 8 Qxe4 dxe4 9 Qe2 Qb4 10 Qc3 Wa5 11 Qh4 0-0 (11... e6 12 e2 Qd7 13 0-0 was slightly better for White in Bönsch-Rabiega, Bundesliga 1993/4) 12 a3 We8 13 e2 e6 14 0-0 Qxc3 15 Wxc3 with an

advantage for White thanks to his bishop-pair, Grooten-Barua, Dieren 2006.

c) 6... f5 7 Wf3 Qg6 8 Qxf6 Wxf6 9 Wxf6 gxf6 (D).



The average club player would not be comfortable defending this endgame for Black because of the doubled f-pawns, but British GM Nigel Short has taken on the black cause at the highest levels. White has surrendered the bishop-pair in order to damage Black's pawn-structure; now he has a choice of plans designed to home in on the vulnerable f5-square:

c1) 10 h4 Qd7 11 h5 f5 12 f3 e6 (the alternative 12... h6! ? looks promising) 13 d3 f5 with roughly equal chances, Bacrot-Short, match (game 1), Albert 2000.

c2) 10 0-0-0 Qd7 11 d3 Qg8 12 g3 Qb6 13 Qf3 Qh5 14 e2 Qb4 15 Qh4 Qg6 and Black's active bishops enable him to maintain the balance, Beliavsky-Short, European Team Ch, Batumi 1999.

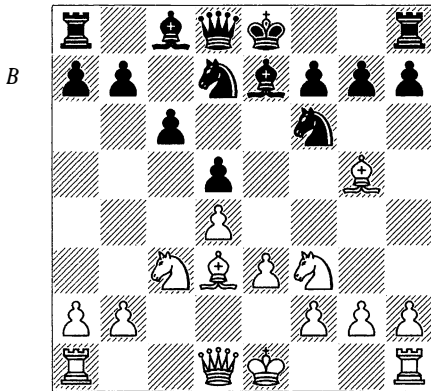
c3) 10 Qf3! Qd7 11 Qh4 e7 12 g3 Qb6 13 f3 a5 14 Qf2 a4 15 Wc1 with a slight structural advantage for White, Van Wely-Short, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

7 d3 e7 8 Wc2

8 Qf3 (D) brings us to a position often reached via alternate move-orders, including:

- 1 Qf3 d5 2 d4 Qf6 3 c4 e6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Qc3 c6 6 Qg5 e7 7 e3 Qbd7 8 d3
- 1 d4 Qf6 2 c4 e6 (Black 'threatens' to play the Nimzo-Indian) 3 Qf3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Qc3 c6 6 Qg5 e7 (6...h6! is more accurate

– see note ‘b2’ to White’s 5th move) 7 e3
 ♖bd7 8 ♙d3



After 8 ♖f3, Black has several options:

a) 8...0-0 9 ♙c2 – 8 ♙c2 0-0 9 ♖f3.

b) 8...♖h5 9 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♙b1! (the attack on the h7-pawn enables White to gain a tempo for launching the minority attack) 11...♖hf6 12 b4 ♙e8 13 ♙c1! (this subtle preparatory move is more effective than 13 b5?! c5 with equal chances according to Kramnik) 13...a6 (Kramnik noted that 13...♖e4 can now be met by 14 b5 because the c3-knight is defended) 14 a4 g6 15 ♙b2 with a strong queenside initiative for White as Black has no kingside counterplay, Kramnik-Timman, Belgrade 1995.

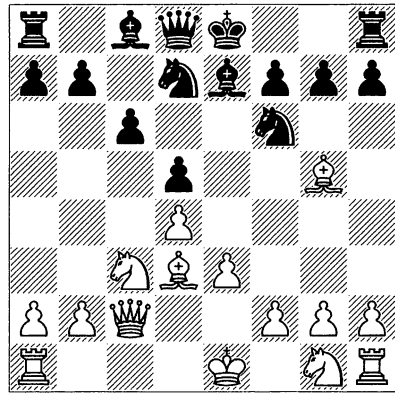
c) With 8...♖e4, Black seeks to ease his position by exchanging minor pieces. Now:

c1) 9 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♙c2 ♖df6 12 ♙a1 ♙f5 (Black has obtained an iron grip on the e4-square by playing natural developing moves) 13 ♖e5 ♖xc3 14 ♙xc3 ♙xd3 15 ♖xd3 ♖e4 16 ♙c2 ♖d6 with equal chances, Kramnik-Kasparov, blitz match (game 21), Moscow 1998.

c2) 9 ♙f4 f5 10 0-0 0-0 11 h3 ♙e8 12 ♙c2 ♖f8 13 ♖e5 ♙g5 (13...♖g6 14 ♖xg6 hxg6 15 f3 ♖xc3 16 bxc3 ♙g5 17 ♙a1 ♙xf4 18 exf4 favours White because of his more active bishop, Stefansson-Kulhanek, Pardubice 2000) 14 ♙xg5 (14 ♙h2!? is an idea to keep more pieces on the board) 14...♙xg5 15 f4 ♙e7 with equal chances in Kramnik-Nikolić, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

We now return to 8 ♙c2 (D):

B



8...0-0

Black can employ a different strategy with 8...♖h5 9 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 (the exchange of dark-squared bishops has relieved some of the pressure on Black’s kingside, but the ‘Carlsbad’ pawn-structure still favours White because his light-squared bishop has more scope than its black counterpart) 10 ♖ge2 and then:

a) 10...♖hf6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖g3 ♖b6 13 ♙a1 h6 14 f3 c5 (this pawn-break leaves Black with an isolated d-pawn) 15 dxc5 ♙xc5 16 ♖b5 ♙xc2 17 ♙xc2 with an advantage for White because of his superior pawn-structure, Varga-Dizdar, Austrian Team Ch 2002/3.

b) 10...g6 11 0-0-0 ♖b6 12 ♖g3 ♖g7! (Black avoids the cooperative 12...♖xg3 13 hxg3 h5 14 ♖b1 ♙e6 15 ♙c1 ♖f8 16 ♖e2 ♖g7 17 ♖f4, with menacing kingside threats for White, Goldin-Vescovi, Buenos Aires 2003) 13 ♖b1 ♙d7 14 ♙c1 0-0-0 15 ♖a4 ♖xa4 16 ♙xa4 ♖b8 17 ♙c3 b6 (17...c5? fails to 18 ♙a3, pinning and winning the c5-pawn) 18 ♙a6 (18 ♙a3!? ♙e8 19 ♙c2 is also dangerous for Black, Timman-Short, Candidates match (game 11), San Lorenzo del Escorial 1993) 18...♖e6 19 ♙hcl with strong queenside pressure, Kasparov-Andersson, World Cup, Reykjavik 1988.

9 ♖ge2

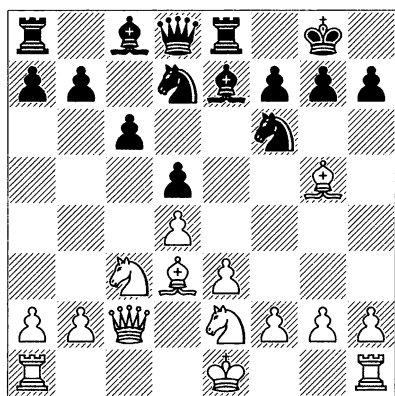
9 ♖f3 is covered in Game 7.

9...♙e8 (D)

10 0-0-0

Queenside castling is White’s most aggressive and dangerous choice. He is now free to fling his kingside pawns forward, but his own king is also a tempting target. More popular is

W



10 O-O ♖f8 11 f3 ♙e6, and here White must decide where to develop his queen's rook:

a) 12 ♖a1 ♜c8 (Black can exchange dark-squared bishops via 12...♗d7 13 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 14 ♗f4 ♜d6 15 ♜f2 ♖ad8 with equality, Kasimdzhanov-Yusupov, World Team Ch, Erevan 2001) 13 ♖h1 ♗d7 14 ♙xe7 ♜xe7!? (the queen recapture looks more natural than 14...♜xe7 15 ♗f4 ♜c7?! 16 ♜f2 and in Kasparov-Andersson, World Cup, Belfort 1988 White went on to win by employing a classic central breakthrough; this game is annotated by Igor Stohl in *Garry Kasparov's Greatest Chess Games, Volume 1*) 15 ♜d2 ♗b6 16 e4 (the central thrust is more aggressive than 16 b3?! ♜cd8 with equal chances, Lutz-Yusupov, Tilburg 1993) 16...♗g6 17 e5!? with sharp play.

b) 12 ♖ad1 and then:

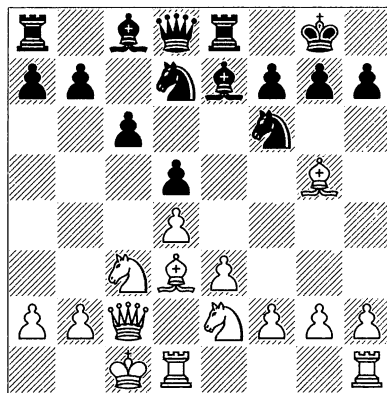
b1) 12...♗d7 13 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 14 e4 dxe4 15 fxe4 ♗b6 (15...c5? 16 d5 c4 17 ♙xc4 ♜c5+ 18 ♖d4 ♙g4 19 ♜d2 gives White a clear plus according to Yusupov – this variation demonstrates why the white rook is so well-placed on d1) 16 e5 (16 ♗f4!?) 16...c5 17 ♗b5! and White had strong central pressure in Lobron-Yusupov, Amsterdam 1994.

b2) 12...♜c8 13 ♖h1 ♗g6 14 e4 dxe4 15 fxe4 ♗g4 16 ♙c1 c5 17 e5! (the pawn advance is more effective than 17 ♙b5 ♜c7! 18 ♗f4 cxd4 19 ♙xe8 dxc3 20 ♙b5 ♗xf4! {this is an improvement over 20...cxb2? 21 ♜xb2 ♗xf4 22 ♙xf4 ♜c2 with equal chances, Gulko-Sturua, Elista Olympiad 1998} 21 ♙xf4 ♜b6 22 ♙d7 {22 ♜e2 a6 23 ♙a4 ♜xb2 and Black wins} 22...♙xd7 23 ♖xd7 ♜b5! and Black has

a strong attack) 17...cxd4 18 ♗xd4 ♜xd4 19 ♙xg6 ♜xe5 20 ♙f4 ♜c5 21 ♙xh7+ ♖h8 22 ♙e4 ♜cd8 with equal chances, Sadler-Asrian, FIDE Knockout, Las Vegas 1999.

We now return to the position after 10 O-O-0 (D):

B



10...a5

Black has alternatives:

a) 10...♜a5 11 ♖b1 b5 12 ♗g3 h6 13 ♙f4!? (White can also switch to the positional approach 13 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♗ce2 ♙d7 15 ♗c1! heading for the vulnerable c5-square, Ward-J.Parker, Guildford 1991) 13...g5 14 ♙e5 ♗xe5 15 dxe5 ♗g4 (15...♗d7? loses to 16 e6) 16 h4 gxh4 17 ♙h7+ ♖h8 18 ♙f5 ♗xe5 (18...b4 19 ♗a4! also looks dangerous for Black) 19 ♙xc8 ♖axc8 20 ♗f5 with compensation for the material according to Shirov.

b) 10...♗f8 11 ♖b1 a5 (11...♗h5 12 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 13 h3 a5 14 g4 ♗f6 15 ♗g3 gives White a promising kingside attack, Kalesis-Skembris, Glyfada 1995) 12 f3 b5 13 ♗g3 (13 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 14 e4 a4 15 exd5 b4! 16 ♗xa4 cxd5 with good compensation for the pawn, Shirov-Milos, Buenos Aires 1993) 13...a4 14 ♗ce2 ♙d7 with sharp play, Greenfeld-King, Budapest 1989.

c) 10...b5 11 ♖b1 a5 – 10...a5 11 ♖b1 b5.

11 ♖b1 b5 12 ♗g3 h6 13 ♙f4!?

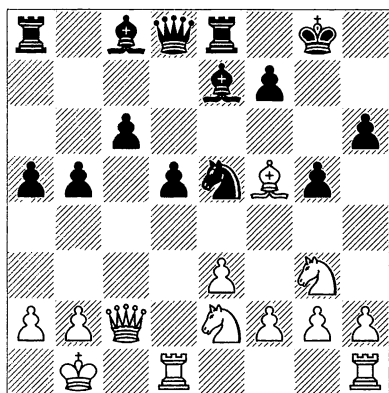
A double-edged idea as White is now committed to sacrificing a pawn, but 13 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♗ce2 ♜b6 was fine for Black in Teplitsky-T.Thorhallsson, Paget Parish 2001.

13...g5 14 ♙e5 ♗xe5 15 dxe5 ♗g4 16 ♙f5?

White should crack open the kingside with 16 h4! gxh4 (16...b4 17 ♖a4 leaves the knight slightly offside, but it does have the benefit of slowing down Black's queenside counterplay) 17 ♖f5 ♙xf5 18 ♙xf5 ♖xe5 19 e4 with complex play.

16...♖xe5 17 ♖ce2 (D)

B



17...♙f8?

The bishop was well-placed on e7, so Black should just get on with his queenside attack by 17...a4! 18 e4 (18 ♖d4 ♙d7) 18...b4 19 ♙xc8 ♖xc8 20 exd5 b3! with a strong attack.

18 e4 ♙b7 19 h4 gxh4?

19...g4!, keeping lines closed on the kingside, would have retained an advantage.

20 ♖h5 ♖g5?

The outcome is still in doubt after 20...b4. Now the black queen becomes trapped.

21 f4! ♖xh5 22 g4

Another way to win the queen is 22 ♖g3 ♖xd1+ 23 ♖xd1 hxg3 24 fxe5, when White has a decisive material advantage.

22...♖xg4 23 ♙dg1 ♙c8 24 ♖g3 (D)

Finally trapping the black queen, but the game is just beginning. Keep a close watch on the b1-h7 diagonal!

24...♙xf5 25 ♖xh5 ♙xe4 26 ♙xg4+!

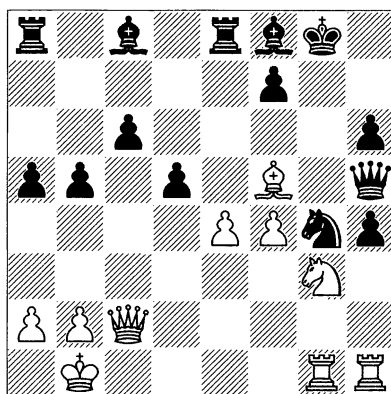
White avoids 26 ♖f6+? ♖h8 27 ♙xg4 ♙g7 with a mess.

26...♙h8 27 ♙gg1 ♙c5 28 ♙c1 ♙d4 29 ♙xh4??

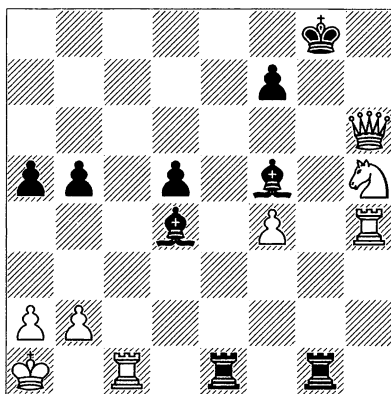
Rowson misses the danger. The cautious 29 ♖a1! wins easily.

29...♙g8??

B



W



33 ♖g5+!

The only move, but a winning one!

33...♙xg5 34 ♙xe1 ♙g2 35 ♙e8+ ♖h7 36 ♖f6++ ♖g6 37 ♙g8+ ♖xf6 38 ♙xg2

White emerges with a decisive material advantage – an unbelievable turn of events.

38...a4 39 ♙d2 ♙e3 40 ♙xd5 b4 41 ♙b5 ♙d2 42 ♙h6+ ♙g6 43 ♙h2 ♙c1 44 f5 1-0

A tough break for the young Egyptian GM, and further proof that the last mistake is always the most painful one.

Game 7 [D36]

Teimour Radjabov – Lazaro Bruzon

Biel 2006

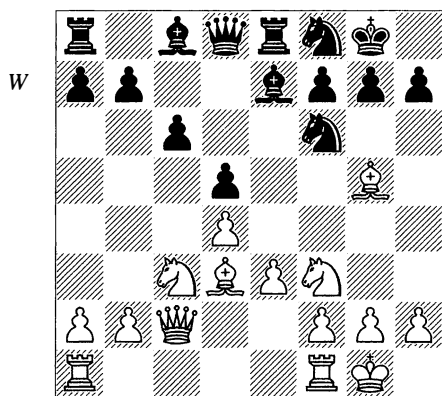
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5
c6 6 e3 ♜bd7 7 ♗d3 ♙e7 8 ♚c2 0-0

For comments on the moves up to here, see Game 6.

9 ♜f3

The alternative 9 ♜ge2 was covered in Game 6.

9...♚e8 10 0-0 ♜f8 (D)



This is the starting point of the main line of the QGD Exchange Variation. White has a choice of plans here: he can prepare a minority attack on the queenside with the pawn advance b4-b5, or he can initiate action in the centre with ♖a1 followed by e4, sometimes in combination with ♜e5 and f4. White can also take a moment to improve his position before committing himself to either of these plans.

11 h3

This flexible move was popularized by the 12th World Champion Anatoly Karpov, while former USA Champion Alex Yermolinsky also championed the idea in his instructive book *The Road to Chess Improvement*. The deceptively modest pawn advance keeps White's options open by providing a retreat-square for his dark-squared bishop and preventing Black's pieces from using the g4-square. Let's briefly review White's alternatives:

a) 11 ♜e5 (White attempts to establish a knight outpost on the e5-square; if Black responds passively, White will follow up with f4) 11...♜g4! (Black seizes the opportunity to offer an exchange of minor pieces) 12 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 ♜xg4 ♙xg4 14 ♖a1 ♙h5 15 f4 f6 16 ♚f2 ♖ad8 with equal chances, J.Parker-C.Cobb, British League (4NCL) 2004/5.

b) 11 a3 a5 12 ♜e5 (12 ♖ab1 – 11 ♖ab1 a5 12 a3) 12...♜g4! 13 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 14 ♜xg4 ♙xg4 15 ♖a1 ♙h5 16 f4 f6 17 ♚f2 ♜f7 with equal chances, Bagirov-Avshalumov, Sevastopol 1986. Note the similarity to line 'a' above – the addition of the moves a3 and ...a5 does not change the evaluation of the position.

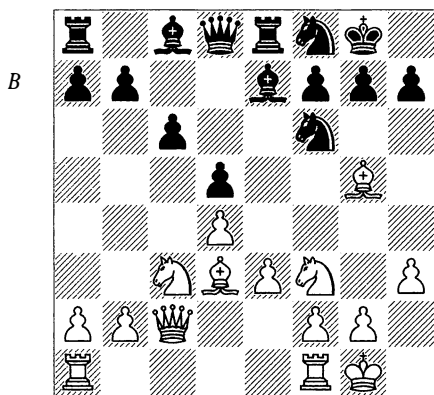
c) 11 ♙xf6 (White concedes the bishop-pair in order to accelerate his minority attack) 11...♙xf6 12 b4 ♙g4! (Black develops his light-squared bishop with tempo and forces White's f3-knight to retreat) 13 ♜d2 ♙e7 (Black repositions his dark-squared bishop to a more active diagonal and prepares to meet b5 with ...c5) 14 ♖ab1 ♙d6 15 ♙f5 ♙h5! (Kasparov retains his light-squared bishop to put pressure on White's kingside) 16 ♖fc1 g6 17 ♙d3 ♚g5 with a balanced game, Timman-Kasparov, USSR-RoW (game 1), London 1984. Here Black was able to drive White's f3-knight away with ...♙g4 and develop his queen to an aggressive post.

d) 11 ♖ab1 (this is the traditional move: White prepares the minority attack) 11...a5 12 a3 ♙d6 13 ♖fe1 ♙g4 (once again a black piece is able to make good use of the g4-square!) 14 ♜d2 ♙h5 15 ♜f1 (15 ♙h4!? ♙g6 16 ♜f3 ♙xd3 17 ♚xd3 {Ivanchuk-Bruzon, Havana 2005}) 17...♜g6 18 ♙g5 h6 19 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 with equal chances – Bruzon) 15...♙g6 16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 h6 (17...♙xd3!? 18 ♚xd3 ♖a3 also looks fine for Black) 18 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 19 b5 ♙xd3 20 ♚xd3 ♜g6 21 bxc6 1/2-1/2 Alterman-Gabriel, Bad Homburg 1996.

e) 11 ♖a1 ♙e6 (11...♜e4 12 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 ♙xe4 dxe4 14 ♜d2 f5 is another solid line

for Black) 12 ♖e5 ♜d6 13 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 14 f4 f6 15 ♜f3 (White avoids exchanges so as to exploit his slight space advantage) 15...♜b6 16 f5 ♙f7 17 ♚f2 (17 e4!?) 17...♜c8 18 e4 dxe4 19 ♜xe4 with a slight central initiative for White, Kharlov-Tischbierek, Biel 1997.

We now return to 11 h3 (D):



11...g6

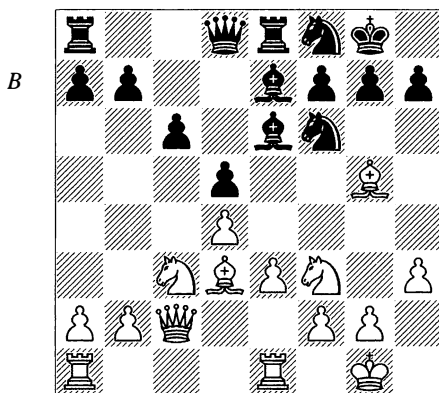
The motivation behind this move is to release the f8-knight from the burden of defending the h7-pawn and to prepare the standard manoeuvre ...♜e6-g7 and ...♙f5 to exchange light-squared bishops. Alternatives:

a) 11...♜g6 12 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13 b4 ♙e7 14 b5 ♙d6 15 bxc6 bxc6 16 ♙f5 (16 ♜b1!? ♙d7 17 ♜bd2 ♚c8 with equal chances, Iskusnykh-Grigoriants, Russian Clubs Cup, Nizhny Novgorod 1999) 16...♚f6 17 ♙xc8 ♚axc8 18 ♚ab1 with a slight advantage for White, P.H.Nielsen-Grishchuk, Esbjerg 2000. White has a structural advantage owing to Black's vulnerable queenside pawns.

b) 11...♜h5 (the idea behind the knight excursion is to relieve some of the kingside pressure by exchanging dark-squared bishops; the drawback is that Black loses time and frequently spends another tempo returning the knight to active duty via ...♜f6) 12 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 ♚ab1 (White prepares the minority attack) 13...♚f6 14 ♜e5 ♚d6 15 b4 ♜f6 16 ♜a4 and White has queenside pressure as Black has difficulty developing his light-squared bishop, Rowson-Slobodjan, French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2005.

c) 11...♜e4 12 ♙f4 f5 13 ♜e5 ♙g5 14 ♙xg5 (14 ♙h2!? looks more logical to keep some pieces on the board) 14...♚xg5 15 f4 (this is a common method of lending support to the e5-knight) 15...♚e7 16 ♙xe4 dxe4 17 ♚fd1 (17 ♜a4!? ♙e6 18 ♜c5 ♙d5 also looks equal) 17...♙e6 18 d5 cxd5 19 ♜xd5 ♚h4 20 ♚f2 ♚xf2+ 21 ♙xf2 1/2-1/2 Kramnik-Nikolić, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

d) 11...♙e6 12 ♚fe1!? (D).



This flexible move is Yermolinsky's preference. Now:

d1) 12...♜h5 13 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 (Erdos-Z.Horvath, Hungary 2002) and now Yermolinsky recommended 14 ♚ab1 followed by a minority attack.

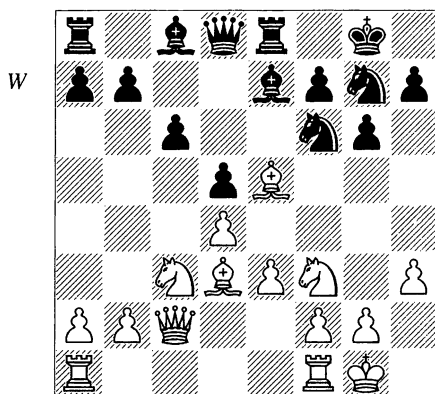
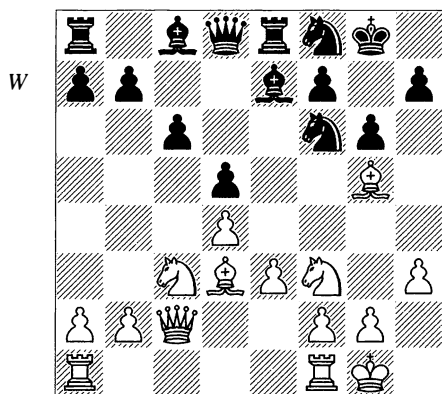
d2) 12...♚c8 13 a3 ♜g6 (13...♜d6 14 ♙f4 {White avoids piece exchanges} 14...♙f6 15 b4 with queenside pressure, Rizzitano-J.Perl, Marlborough 2004) 14 b4 a5 15 ♜a4!? led to an instructive victory for White in Yermolinsky-Christiansen, USA Ch, Salt Lake City 1999. This game is annotated by John Nunn in *Understanding Chess Move by Move*.

d3) 12...♜d6 13 ♙f4! ("Now White keeps the bishops, as Black's position lacks sufficient space." – Yermolinsky) 13...♜g6 14 ♙h2 ♜df8 15 ♚ad1 ♜h4 16 ♜xh4 ♙xh4 17 e4! with central pressure for White, Yermolinsky-Yusupov, Chicago 1996.

We now return to the position after 11...g6 (D):

12 ♙f4

Alternatives:



a) 12 $\text{d}e5$ $\text{d}6d7!$ (the safest response: Black offers an exchange of minor pieces to relieve the pressure) 13 $\text{e}xe7$ $\text{c}xe7$ 14 $\text{d}xd7$ $\text{e}xd7$ 15 $\text{f}ae1$ $\text{d}e6$ 16 $\text{f}3$ $\text{f}ad8$ with roughly equal chances, Atalik-Rogozenko, Romanian Team Ch, Sovata 2003.

b) 12 $\text{f}ab1$ $\text{d}e6$ 13 $\text{e}h4$ $\text{d}g7$ (Black prepares to develop his light-squared bishop) 14 $\text{b}4$ $\text{a}6$ 15 $\text{a}4$ $\text{e}f5$ 16 $\text{b}5$ axb5 17 axb5 $\text{e}xd3$ 18 $\text{c}xd3$ $\text{d}f5$ 19 $\text{e}xf6$ $\text{e}xf6$ 20 bxc6 bxc6 21 $\text{f}c1$ $\text{f}a3$ 22 $\text{f}a1$ $\text{c}a8$ with equal chances, Ki.Georgiev-Onishchuk, Poikovsky 2001. White has a slight structural advantage here because he has only one pawn-island in comparison to Black's two, but Black is able to hold the balance because his pieces are active and he can easily defend the c6-pawn.

c) 12 $\text{e}xf6!$? (White switches to the minority attack) 12... $\text{e}xf6$ 13 $\text{b}4$ and then:

c1) 13... $\text{a}6$ 14 $\text{a}4$ $\text{e}e6$ (14... $\text{d}e6$ 15 $\text{f}ab1$ $\text{d}g5!$?) 15 $\text{b}5$ axb5 16 axb5 $\text{d}d7$ 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 $\text{d}e2!$ $\text{c}5$ 19 $\text{e}b5!$ with a slight advantage for White, Karpov-Ehlvest, Vienna 1996.

c2) 13... $\text{d}e6$ 14 $\text{f}d1$ $\text{a}6$ 15 $\text{e}f1$ $\text{c}d6$ 16 $\text{a}3$ $\text{e}d8?$! (16... $\text{d}g5$ is equal – Karpov) 17 $\text{e}4!$ dxe4 18 $\text{d}xe4$ $\text{c}f4$ 19 $\text{f}e1$ $\text{e}b6$ 20 $\text{c}c3$ with an advantage for White, Karpov-Beliavsky, Linares 1991.

d) 12 $\text{e}h6$ $\text{e}d6!$? 13 $\text{f}ab1$ $\text{e}d7!$? 14 $\text{b}4$ (14 $\text{f}e1$ $\text{c}c8$ 15 $\text{d}g5$ $\text{d}e6$ 16 $\text{f}4$ {I.Sokolov-Sadler, Dutch Team Ch 2001} 16... $\text{c}c7$ with equal chances) 14... $\text{c}c8$ 15 $\text{e}g5$ with kingside pressure, Mkrtchian-Shadrina, European Women's Ch, Kusadasi 2006.

12... $\text{d}e6$ 13 $\text{e}e5$ $\text{d}g7$ (D)

With this standard knight manoeuvre, Black prepares to develop his light-squared bishop.

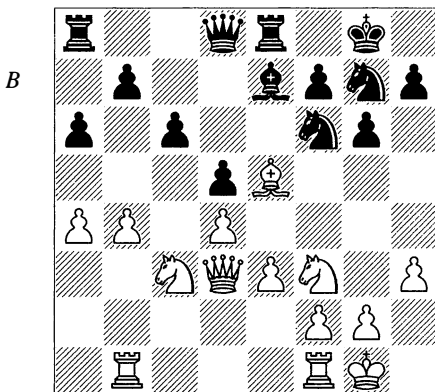
14 $\text{f}ab1$

The rook deployment behind the b-pawn is a very important idea in positions with a 'Carlsbad' pawn-structure: White prepares to attack Black's queenside pawn-majority with $\text{b}4$ - $\text{b}5$ in order to create a weakness on c6. Many club players are tempted to seize the half-open c-file with 14 $\text{f}ac1$?! but this mechanical move is ineffective here because White cannot increase the pressure along the c-file with pieces alone; instead he must advance his b-pawn to attack the base of Black's pawn-chain.

14... $\text{e}f5$ 15 $\text{b}4$ $\text{a}6$

Black forces White to play $\text{a}4$ in order to achieve the $\text{b}5$ pawn advance. The benefit is that Black avoids being saddled with an isolated a-pawn and his rook will be well-positioned along the potentially open a-file.

16 $\text{a}4$ $\text{e}xd3$ 17 $\text{c}xd3$ (D)



17...b5!?

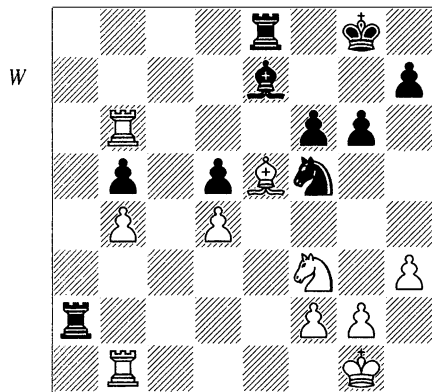
Bruzon prefers active defence: now White's b1-rook is burdened with defending the b4-pawn and Black plans the manoeuvre ... $\text{d}5\text{-d}6\text{-c}4$ to block the c-file. The quieter alternative is $17...\text{d}5$ $18\text{ b}5\text{ axb}5$ $19\text{ axb}5\text{ d}6$ $20\text{ bxc}6\text{ bxc}6$ $21\text{ a}1$ with a slight structural plus for White.

18 $\text{f}1\text{c}1\text{ d}5$ 19 $\text{e}4$!?

Radjabov annotated this game for *NIC Magazine* 2006/6 and here he pointed out the alternative plan $19\text{ c}2$!? $\text{d}7$ $20\text{ b}1\text{c}1\text{ d}6$ $21\text{ d}6\text{ d}5$ (a pawn sacrifice to crack open the queenside) $22...\text{e}5$ $23\text{ dxe}5\text{ fxe}5$ $24\text{ d}2$! $\text{bxa}4$ and now $25\text{ d}4$ or $25\text{ a}3$!? “in both cases with an edge for White”.

19... $\text{dxe}4$ 20 $\text{dxe}4\text{ dxe}4$ 21 $\text{a}4\text{ d}5$ 22 $\text{c}5\text{ cxd}5$ 23 $\text{axb}5\text{ axb}5$ 24 $\text{f}1\text{c}6$!

White prepares to attack the b5-pawn from behind. The ‘wrong-coloured’ bishop on e5 controls the b8-square and prevents Black from being able to defend the pawn.

24... $\text{a}2$ 25 $\text{f}1\text{b}6\text{ f}6$ (D)**26 $\text{h}2$?!?**

Alternatives:

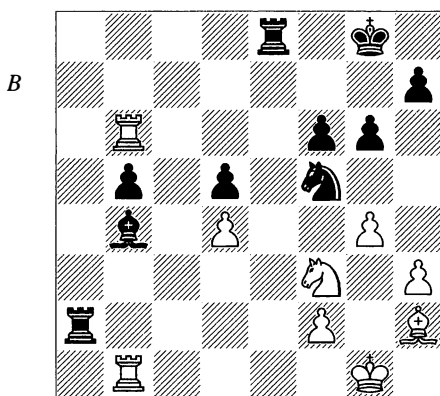
a) $26\text{ f}1\text{xf}6$? (this careless move gives away White's advantage) $26...\text{f}6$ $27\text{ f}1\text{xf}6\text{ e}2$ $28\text{ f}1\text{f}1\text{ e}2$ and a draw is the most likely result.

b) $26\text{ b}8$! (the idea behind this odd-looking move is to prevent Black from activating his e8-rook via the a-file) $26...\text{c}8$ $27\text{ f}1\text{xb}5\text{ c}2$ $28\text{ a}5\text{ f}2$ $29\text{ a}2\text{ a}2$ $30\text{ b}5$ “and White is clearly better” – Radjabov. Note the strength of White's passed pawn after $30...\text{d}4$ 31

$\text{d}4\text{ d}5$ $32\text{ b}6\text{ d}4$ $33\text{ h}1$ – the relentless pawn will cost Black his bishop, leaving White with a technically won endgame.

26... $\text{f}1\text{xb}4$?

Black overlooks the hidden defensive resource $26...\text{a}8$!! $27\text{ g}4$ ($27\text{ f}1\text{xb}5\text{ a}1$ $28\text{ f}1\text{xf}1$ $29\text{ f}1\text{xf}1\text{ a}1$ holds the position because the white king cannot escape the checks) $27...\text{a}3$!! $28\text{ gxf}5\text{ fxf}3$ $29\text{ fxg}6\text{ fxf}2$ $30\text{ gxh}7$ $31\text{ h}7$ $32\text{ b}8\text{ g}6$ $32\text{ f}1\text{xb}5$ “leading to a drawish position” – Radjabov. I think Black can maintain the balance with $32...\text{f}5$ $33\text{ f}1\text{b}7\text{ f}8$.

27 $\text{g}4$! (D)**27... $\text{a}5$?**

The best chance was $27...\text{d}4$ $28\text{ d}4\text{ d}5$ $29\text{ e}6\text{ fxe}6$ $30\text{ d}5\text{ fxf}2$ $31\text{ h}1$ “with good practical chances to win for White, but Black could still fight.” – Radjabov.

28 $\text{a}6$!

Black has no way to cope with the pin along the a-file. Now he must scramble to avoid losing a piece.

28... $\text{g}7$ 29 $\text{f}1\text{xb}5\text{ a}3$ 30 $\text{g}2\text{ b}4$ 31 $\text{xa}3\text{ a}3$ 32 $\text{f}1\text{xd}5$

White finally wins the d5-pawn, and his own d4-pawn cannot be stopped.

32... $\text{e}7$ 33 $\text{a}5\text{ d}8$ 34 $\text{d}5\text{ b}4$ 35 $\text{b}5\text{ c}3$ 36 $\text{f}1\text{h}5$ 37 $\text{e}2\text{ h}4$ 38 $\text{h}4\text{ a}8$ 39 $\text{b}3\text{ a}5$ 40 $\text{d}4\text{ e}8$ 41 $\text{d}3\text{ e}1$ 42 $\text{d}6\text{ d}8$ 43 $\text{b}7$ 1-0

Black gave up in view of $43...\text{a}5$ $44\text{ d}7\text{ f}5$ $45\text{ d}6\text{ e}6$ $46\text{ c}4$, and White wins the house.

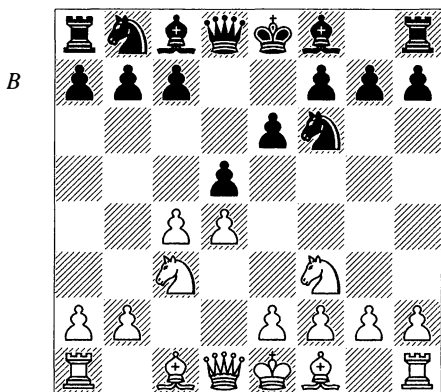
Game 8 [D37]

Magnus Carlsen – Nigel Short

Hoogeveen 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 (D)

4 ♙g5 is covered in Chapters 6 to 8.



This position often arises via one of the following move-orders:

- 1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 d5 4 ♜c3
- 1 ♜f3 d5 2 d4 ♜f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♜c3

4...♙e7

Black has a wide range of major alternatives here:

a) 4...dxc4 is a line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted, but there are possible transpositions back to territory covered within this book; for instance, 5 e4 ♙b4 is the Vienna Variation (Chapter 4).

b) 4...c6 is the Semi-Slav, and is beyond the scope of this book.

c) 4...♙b4 and then 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 is the Ragozin Defence, while 5 ♙g5 dxc4 is the Vienna Variation, both discussed in Chapter 4.

d) 4...c5 is the Semi-Tarrasch Defence (Chapter 5).

On the subject of move-orders, it is useful to note that the position after the text-move can also arise from the Alatortsev sequence 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♙e7 4 ♜f3 ♜f6.

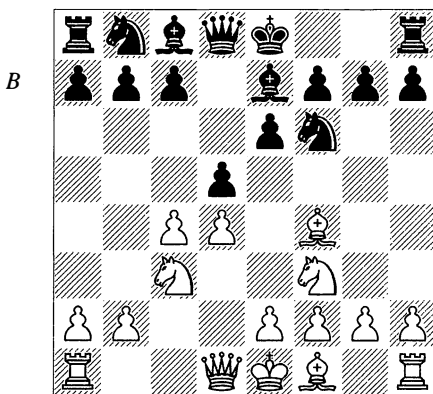
5 ♙f4 (D)

This is the characteristic move of the Blackburne Variation. The main line 5 ♙g5 is covered

in Chapters 6-8. Let's take a moment to explore the differences between the two bishop moves:

- A bishop developed to the g5-square applies direct pressure on Black's f6-knight and makes it more difficult for Black to achieve the ...c5 break. A potential drawback is that the position of the bishop on g5 sometimes allows Black to free his position with a timely ...♜e4.
- A bishop situated on f4 typically enables White to retain more pieces on the board as there is no easy way for Black to engineer a mass exchange of minor pieces without incurring an isolated d5-pawn. A potential drawback is that it is easier for Black to achieve the freeing ...c5 break, but in many near-symmetrical positions the white bishop on the f4-square is more active than its counterpart on c8.

The choice of development squares for White's dark-squared bishop should be viewed as a matter of individual style. We cannot conclude that either of these moves is superior to the other – they are simply different strategies aimed at suppressing Black's development.



5...0-0

5...dxc4!? is relatively unexplored. Now:

a) 6 e4 ♖b4 (Black falls behind in development after 6...b5?! 7 ♜xb5 ♖b4+ 8 ♜c3 0-0 9 ♖xc4 ♜xe4 10 0-0! with a strong attack) 7 ♖g5 is another transposition to the Vienna Variation.

b) 6 e3 ♜d5!? 7 ♖xc4 (7 ♖g3!? ♜b6 {7...♖b4!} 8 ♖xc4 ♜xc4 9 ♖a4+ c6 10 ♖xc4 gives White a slight space advantage) 7...♜xf4 8 exf4 0-0 (8...♜c6!? was suggested by Crouch; a possible continuation is 9 0-0 0-0 10 d5 exd5 11 ♜xd5 with equal chances) 9 0-0 ♜d7 10 ♜e5 1/2-1/2 de Firmian-Gulko, Manila Interzonal 1990.

6 e3

Now that his dark-squared bishop has been developed outside the pawn-chain, White prepares to develop his light-squared bishop.

6...c5

The ...c5 pawn-break is one of Black's standard methods of creating counterplay in the QGD.

7 dxc5

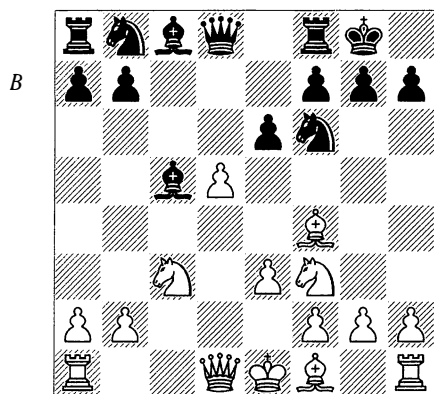
White captures the c4-pawn to force Black to lose a tempo recapturing the pawn.

7...♙xc5

Black loses time with his queen following 7...♙a5?! 8 a3 dxc4 (the idea behind White's last move is that 8...♜e4? 9 b4! ♜xc3 10 ♖c2 costs Black a pawn) 9 ♖xc4 ♖xc5 10 ♖e2 a6 11 e4 with a development lead for White in Portisch-Eliskases, Tel Aviv Olympiad 1964.

8 cxd5 (D)

8 ♖c2 is covered in Game 9.



The knight recapture relieves some of the pressure on Black's position by forcing an exchange of minor pieces. The drawback is that Black incurs an isolated d5-pawn. Alternatives:

a) 8...♙a5?! (this speculative idea has thus far received only a single outing, viz. I.Farago-I.Zaitsev, Sochi 1980) 9 dxe6 ♖xe6 10 ♖d3 ♜d8 11 ♖e2 ♜d5 12 0-0! (White has a clear plus according to Farago) 12...♜xc3 13 bxc3 ♖xc3 14 ♜ad1 with a tremendous attacking position for White. After 14...♜d7 15 ♖c7! ♜dc8 16 ♖xh7+! he wins a pawn.

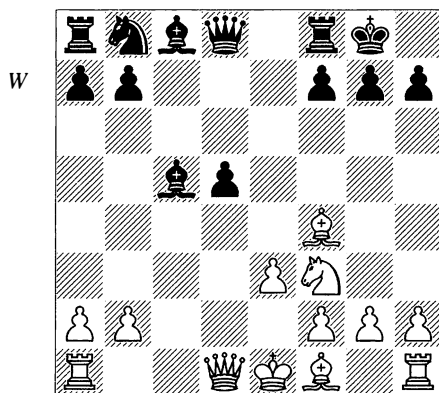
b) 8...exd5 9 ♖e2 ♜c6 10 0-0 ♖e6 11 ♜c1 ♜c8 and now:

b1) 12 ♜xd5?? (falling into a well-known trap in such positions) 12...♖xd5 13 ♖xd5 ♜xd5 14 ♜xc5 ♜xf4 15 exf4 ♜d4! 16 ♜e5 ♜xe2+ 17 ♜xe2 ♖c4 and Black wins the exchange.

b2) 12 ♜b5 ♜e4 13 ♜d2 ♜xd2 (another idea is 13...♖e7 14 ♜xe4 dxe4, when 15 ♖a4 {suggested by Kasparov in *Informator* 42} 15...♖d2! {"a convincing reply" – Crouch} 16 ♜c3 ♜b4 is fine for Black) 14 ♖xd2 ♖b4 with equal chances, Korchnoi-Kasparov, Brussels 1986.

b3) 12 a3 ♖b6 13 ♜a4 ♜e4 14 h3 h6 15 ♖d3 with a slight edge, Illescas-Korneev, Dos Hermanas 2005. White can increase the pressure on Black's isolated d5-pawn.

9 ♜xd5 exd5 (D)



10 a3

White expends a tempo to prevent the bishop check. Black develops good counterplay against

8...♜xd5

the white king after 10 ♖d3 ♖b4+ 11 ♔e2 ♘c6 12 ♗c2, and now Black must decide how to defend his h7-pawn:

a) 12...g6 13 ♖hd1 ♖g4 and then:

a1) 14 ♗b3!? (Mikhalchishin-Zheliandinov, Lvov 1999) 14...♖d6! 15 ♗xd5 ♖xf4 16 ♗xd8 ♖axd8 17 exf4 ♘d4+ 18 ♔f1 ♘xf3 19 gxf3 ♖xf3 20 ♖e2 ♖d5 favours Black thanks to White's weak pawns.

a2) 14 ♗a4!? (D.Gurevich-Rechlis, Beer-sheba 1987) 14...♖xf3+ 15 gxf3 ♗f6 16 ♖ac1 ♖e7 (or 16...♖ae8!?) looks fine for Black.

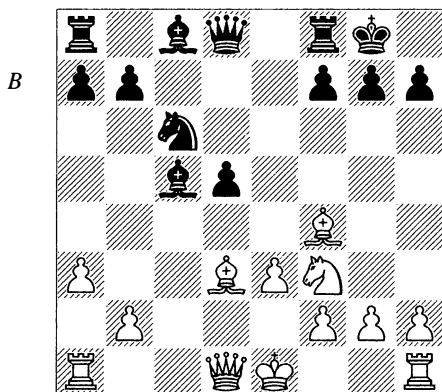
a3) 14 ♔f1 ♖xf3 15 gxf3 ♖d6 16 ♖g3 ♗f6 with equal chances, Sydor-Barsov, Val Thorens 1995.

b) 12...h6 13 ♖hd1 ♗f6 14 a3 ♖e7 15 ♗c3 ♖e6 and here:

b1) 16 ♗xf6!? ♖xf6 17 ♖ab1 was suggested by Crouch. Now Black can try 17...g5!? (the calm 17...♖ac8 also looks adequate) 18 ♖g3 g4 19 ♘h4 ♖fe8 20 ♔f1 ♘e5 with roughly equal chances.

b2) 16 ♘d4 ♘xd4+ 17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18 exd4 1/2-1/2 Tukmakov-Geller, USSR Ch, Tbilisi 1978.

10...♘c6 11 ♖d3 (D)



11...♖b6

Black defends against the threat of ♖xh7+ and keeps control of the d4-square. Alternatives:

a) 11...♖e7 (Black redeploys his dark-squared bishop to the long diagonal with the goal of applying pressure on White's b2-pawn) 12 0-0 ♖f6 13 ♗b3 g5!? (the calmer 13...g6 has also been played several times) 14 ♖g3 h5 15

h4 gxh4 16 ♖f4 (Jeremić-Abramović, Budva 2004) 16...h3!? with sharp play.

b) 11...♖d6 (Black plays to exchange the dark-squared bishops) 12 ♗a4 ♖xf4 13 ♗xf4 d4 and now:

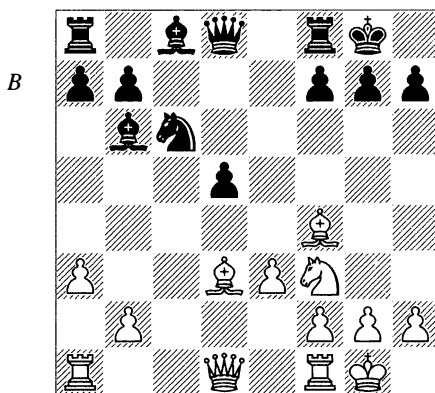
b1) 14 ♘d4?! ♗a5+ 15 ♔e2 ♘xd4+ 16 ♗xd4 ♖d8 17 ♗b4 ♗h5+ (17...♗g5!? was played in Karolyi-Parkkinen, ICCF e-mail 2000; Tibor Karolyi analyses this move in detail in *NIC Yearbook 60*) 18 f3 (Castaldo-Lanzani, Milan 2003) 18...♗g5!? 19 g3 ♖f5!? 20 e4 ♖e6 gives Black good compensation for the pawn because of White's exposed king.

b2) 14 0-0-0 ♗d5!? (a new idea to target White's vulnerable king) 15 exd4 ♖e6 16 ♗e4 ♖fc8 17 ♗xd5 (17 ♗xh7+?! ♔f8 18 ♗h8+ ♔e7 19 ♗h4+ ♔f8 and now 20 ♗h8+ repeats the position, while White can avoid repeating moves with the adventurous 20 ♔d2!?) 17...♖xd5 18 ♔b1 ♖d8 19 ♖he1 ♖xf3 20 gxf3 ♖xd4 1/2-1/2 Yermolinsky-Shabalov, USA Ch, Seattle 2002. A likely continuation is 21 ♖e4 ♖xd1+ 22 ♖xd1 ♖d8 with an equal endgame.

b3) 14 0-0 dxe3 15 ♖ad1 ♗f6 16 fxe3 ♗xf4 17 exf4 ♖g4 with equal chances, S.Williams-Lanzani, European Ch, Warsaw 2005.

b4) 14 ♖d1!? was suggested by Crouch, and awaits a practical trial. After 14...♗a5+ I think White should play 15 ♖d2!? dxe3 16 fxe3 with a promising kingside attack.

12 0-0 (D)



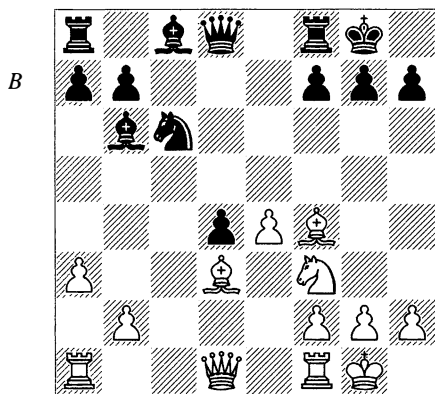
12...d4

This is Black's most popular choice here. Alternatives:

a) 12...♖f6 13 b4 ♕f5 14 b5 ♘d4! (Black is able to simplify the position thanks to this tactical blow) 15 ♕xf5 (15 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 16 ♖c1 ♕b6 17 ♕xf5 ♖xf5 is also equal, Seirawan-Beliavsky, Belgrade 1991) 15...♘xf3+ 16 ♖xf3 ♖xf5 17 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 18 a4 ♖ac8 with equal chances, Yusupov-Goldin, Tilburg 1992.

b) 12...♕g4 13 h3 ♕h5 14 b4 ♖e8 15 ♖c1 a6 16 ♕xa6!? ♖xa6 17 b5 ♖xa3 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 ♖xc6 and White had a slight advantage in Leko-Kramnik, World Ch match (game 5), Brissago 2004. Leko was eventually able to convert his endgame advantage into victory. This endgame has been reached more than a dozen times during the past few years and experience has shown that Black is struggling to achieve a draw.

13 e4 (D)



13...♕g4

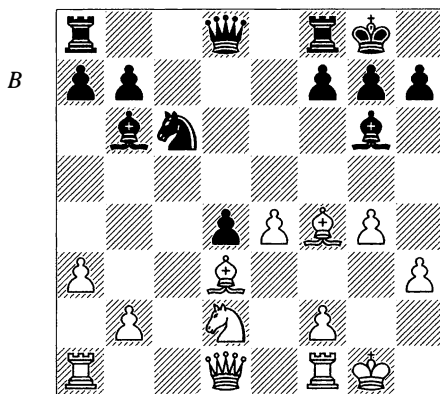
Black can offer an exchange of dark-squared bishops via 13...♕c7!? 14 ♕xc7 (14 ♖c1! ♖e8 15 ♖e1! was suggested by Shipov; then 15...♘e5 16 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 17 ♖c5 looks promising for White as his active queen is able to disrupt Black's development) 14...♖xc7 15 h3 ♖b6 16 b4 ♕e6 with sharp play, Topalov-Morozevich, FIDE World Ch, San Luis 2005.

14 h3 ♕h5

Black can also interpolate 14...♖f6 15 ♕h2 ♕xf3 16 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 17 gxf3 (White has obtained the bishop-pair at the cost of a slight weakening of his pawn-structure) 17...♘a5 18 ♖ad1 ♖ac8 19 ♖fe1 (19 ♕d6 ♖fd8 20 ♕e7 ♖e8 21 ♕b4 ♘c4 with an equal endgame,

Radjabov-Beliavsky, Moscow rapid 2002) was played in Dreev-Beliavsky, Essen 2000. Now Dreev recommends 19...♖fd8 with an unclear position.

15 g4 ♕g6 16 ♘d2 (D)



16...f6

Short supports the e5-square and prepares a retreat-square for his light-squared bishop. Alternatives:

a) 16...♕c7 17 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 18 f4 f6 19 h4 ♖ae8 20 ♖f3 (Krasenkow-Skalik, Polish Team Ch, Suwalki 1999) 20...♕f7 21 h5 ♕e6 with a balanced game, as it is difficult for White to continue advancing his kingside pawns without conceding the e5-square to the black knight.

b) 16...♖e8 17 ♕g3 f6 18 f4 ♖d7 with equal chances, Galyas-Paci, Budapest 2001.

17 ♖c1 ♘h8 18 ♘c4 ♕c7 19 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 20 f4 ♖ae8

Black could transpose into an earlier game with 20...♕f7 21 b4 ♕xc4?! (the patient move 21...♖e7 looks better as Black is under no compulsion to exchange his bishop for the white knight) 22 ♖xc4 with a slight advantage for White, Pelletier-Ubilava, Barcelona 2000.

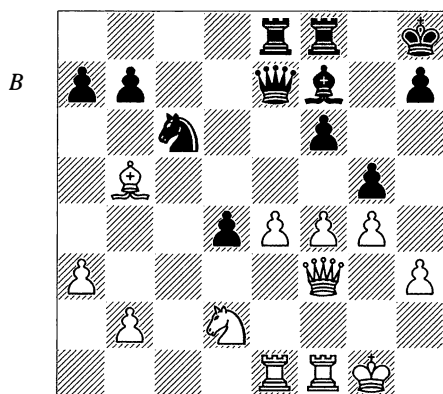
21 ♖f3 ♖e7 22 ♖ce1 ♕f7 23 ♘d2 g5 24 ♕b5 (D)

24...a6?

The decisive error. Black can hold the balance by 24...♕g6! 25 ♖d3 ♖d8, with equal chances according to Dautov.

25 ♕xc6 bxc6 26 fxg5 fxg5 27 ♖f6+!

Carlsen exploits the miscue to force a superior endgame.



27...♔g8?

Relatively best is 27...♖xf6 28 ♜xf6 ♙e6 (28...♜c8 29 ♜c1 c5 30 b3 also favours White) 29 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 30 ♜c1 ♜c8 31 b4 with a clear plus for White in the endgame due to Black's vulnerable pawns.

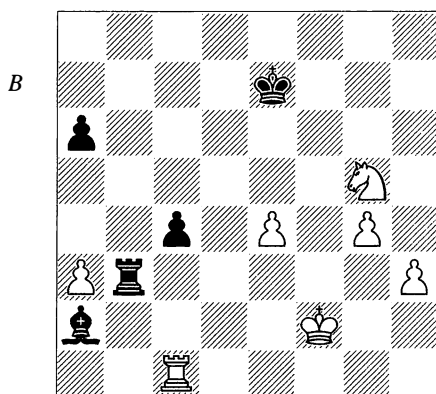
28 ♖xd4

White has won a pawn and Black's remaining pawns are vulnerable.

28...c5 29 ♖f6 ♖xf6 30 ♜xf6 ♜b8 31 ♔f3 ♜xb2 32 ♔xg5 ♙a2 33 ♜xf8+ ♔xf8 34 ♔xh7+ ♔e7 35 ♔g5 c4

The advanced c-pawn is Black's last hope for counterplay.

36 ♜c1 ♜b3 37 ♔f2 (D)



37...c3

White has too much firepower after 37...♜xa3 38 h4 c3 39 h5 ♔f6 40 ♔f3 and the kingside pawns roll in.

38 e5 ♜xa3 39 ♔e4 c2 40 ♜xc2 ♜xh3 41 ♜c7+ ♔d8

Black's king must retreat to the back rank as 41...♔e6? 42 ♔g5+ costs him a rook.

42 ♜a7 ♙c4 43 g5 ♜h4 44 ♔d6 ♙e6 45 g6 ♜g4 46 g7 a5 47 ♔f3 ♜g1 48 ♔b7+ ♔e8 49 ♔c5 ♙f7 50 ♔e4!

Carlsen finishes with an attractive combination to pick off the black rook.

50...♜xg7 51 ♔d6+ ♔f8 52 ♜a8+ ♔e7 53 ♔f5+ ♔d7 54 ♜a7+ 1-0

Game 9 [D37]

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov – Pavel Tregubov

Dubai 2002

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♔f3 ♔f6 4 ♔c3 ♙e7 5 ♙f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♙xc5

For comments on the moves up to here, see Game 8.

8 ♖c2 (D)

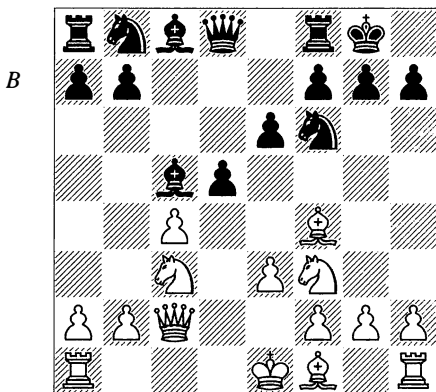
White can also play 8 a3 ♔c6 9 ♖c2 – 8 ♖c2 ♔c6 9 a3.

8 cxd5 is covered in Game 8.

8...♔c6 9 a3

White prevents the possibility of ...♔b4 and creates the option of a tempo-gaining b4 pawn advance.

9...♖a5



The queen move compels White either to castle queenside or to move his rook to renew the threat of advancing the b-pawn. Let's briefly examine the alternatives:

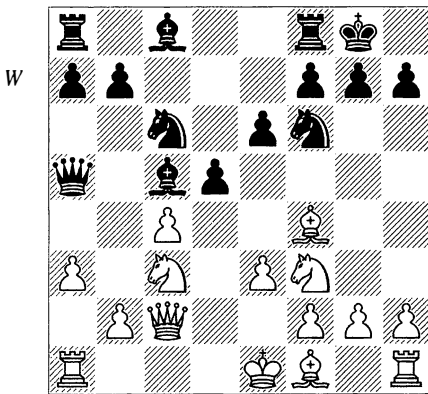
a) 9...♙d6?! 10 ♙g5! ♚e5 11 0-0-0 ♚xf3 12 gxf3 ♙e7 13 ♖g1 gives White a strong kingside attack, Khenkin-Bator, Stockholm 1990.

b) 9...♗e7 10 ♖d1 ♖d8 11 ♙g5 dxc4 12 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 13 ♙xc4 h6 14 ♙h4 with a slight advantage for White thanks to his more active queen's bishop, Hertneck-J.Cobb, European Ch, Saint Vincent 2005.

c) 9...♙e7 10 ♖d1 ♗a5 – 9...♗a5 10 ♖d1 ♙e7.

d) 9...♙d7 10 ♖d1 ♖c8 11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♙e2 ♙e6 13 0-0 ♗e7 14 ♙g5 ♖fd8 15 ♗a4 h6 16 ♙h4 g5 17 ♚xg5! (White could also play the calmer 17 ♙g3 ♚h5 18 ♚b5 to occupy the d4-square) 17...hxg5 18 ♙xg5 with good compensation for the piece, Bagaturov-Egiazarian, Tbilisi 2001.

We now return to 9...♗a5 (D):



10 0-0-0

Queenside castling has developed into the most popular choice here. Despite the move's initially surprising nature, the logic behind it is clear: White breaks the pin on his c3-knight and prepares to attack the black king by advancing his kingside pawns. The location of the respective kings on opposite wings usually leads to sharp, dynamic play where every tempo is crucial. Black's ability to activate his light-squared bishop is often a reliable indicator for evaluating

the characteristic structures; if Black can manage to open lines with ...e5 or ...b5, he will have good chances to create counterplay by attacking the white king.

White has several alternatives:

a) 10 ♖c1 (the rook has difficulty influencing the centre from the c1-square) 10...d4 11 exd4 (11 b4? ♗xa3 12 bxc5 ♚b4 13 ♗d2 dxc3 14 ♗xc3 ♗xc3+ 15 ♖xc3 ♚e4 16 ♖c1 f6 favours Black) 11...♚xd4 (11...♙xd4 12 ♙e2 e5 13 ♙d2 ♗d8 with equal chances, Glek-Lputian, Tashkent 1984) 12 ♚xd4 ♙xd4 13 ♙d3 (so far this is Tomaszewski-Staniszewski, Naleczow 1985) 13...♖d8 14 0-0 ♙d7 (14...♗h5!?) 15 ♖fd1 ♙c6 with equal chances.

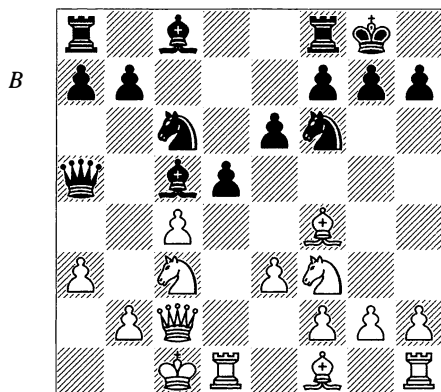
b) 10 ♖a2!? (an interesting idea of the Armenian IM Ashot Nadanian: White protects the rook and threatens to win a piece with b4) 10...♙e7 (10...♚e4 11 cxd5 ♚xc3 12 bxc3 exd5 13 ♙d3 h6 14 0-0 with a slight advantage for White in the stem game Nadanian-Mpenza, corr. 2000) 11 b4 ♗d8 12 ♗b3 a5 13 b5 a4! (an *intermezzo* to clear the a5-square for Black's pieces) 14 ♗c2 (White misses his light-squared bishop after 14 ♚xa4? ♚a5 15 ♗c2 ♚xc4 16 ♙xc4 ♗a5+ 17 ♚c3 dxc4 with an advantage for Black) 14...♚a5 15 ♗xa4. So far this is A.Nikitin-Zamruk, Togliatti 2001; now one reasonable idea is 15...♚e4!? 16 ♚xe4 dxe4 17 ♚d2 f5 with roughly equal chances.

c) 10 ♖d1 ♙e7 11 ♚d2 e5 12 ♙g5 d4 13 ♚b3 ♗d8 14 ♙e2 a5!? (Efim Geller introduced this sharp move into tournament practice) 15 ♚a4 g6 (the most popular choice: Black prepares to harass the white queen with ...♙f5) 16 ♙xf6 (16 exd4 ♙f5 17 ♗c1 exd4 18 0-0 ♖e8 with equal chances, Hübner-Short, Tilburg 1988) 16...♙xf6 17 c5 ♙e6 18 e4 ♗e8 19 ♚b6 a4 20 ♚d2 ♖a5 with a balanced game, Alterman-Kasparov, Tel Aviv simul 1998.

d) 10 ♚d2 ♙b4 (10...♙e7 is another branch) 11 cxd5 ♚xd5 (11...exd5 is also possible) 12 ♚xd5 exd5 13 ♙d3 g6 14 ♖c1 ♙e7 15 0-0 ♙f6 16 ♚b3 ♗b6 (Topalov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2001) 17 ♙d6 ♚d4 (17...♖e8 18 ♙c5 ♗d8 19 ♙b5 with a slight advantage to White according to Karolyi; White will follow up with ♖fd1 to increase the pressure on Black's isolated d5-pawn) 18 ♚xd4 ♗xd6 19 ♗c5 ♗xc5 20 ♖xc5

♙e6 21 ♜fc1 with a slight structural advantage for White.

We now return to 10 0-0-0 (D):



10...♙e7

Alternatives:

a) 10...a6?! (Black prepares queenside counterplay with ...b5, but the move may be a little too slow) 11 ♘d2 ♙e7 12 g4! e5 (12...b5 was suggested by Crouch as an improvement, but after 13 g5 ♘h5 14 ♘b3! ♙b6 15 cxd5 ♘xf4 16 exf4 White has an extra pawn) 13 g5 exf4 14 gxf6 ♙xf6 15 ♘xd5 fxe3 (15...♙e5? 16 ♘b3 ♙d8 17 exf4 gives White an extra pawn and an attack, Hjartarson-B.Thorsteinsson, Icelandic Team Ch, Reykjavik 1997) 16 ♘xf6+ gxf6 17 fxe3 with just an edge for White.

b) 10...dxc4 11 ♙xc4 a6!? 12 ♘g5 ♙e7 13 h4 h6 14 ♘ce4 ♘xe4 15 ♙xe4 ♙f5 16 ♙xf5 exf5 17 ♘f3 with a slight advantage for White, A.Sokolovs-Beliavsky, Erevan Olympiad 1996.

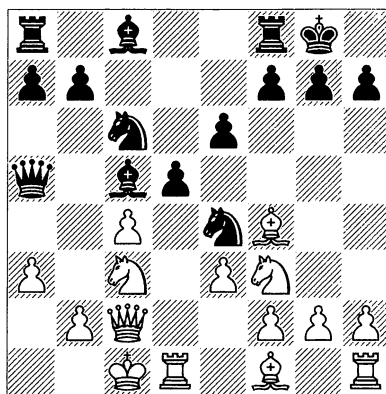
c) 10...♙d7 11 g4!? ♜fc8 12 ♘b1 b5! 13 cxb5 ♘e7 14 ♙a4 (14 ♘d2 ♙d8 15 ♘b3? ♘e4 enabled Black to seize the initiative in Gelfand-Beliavsky, Linares 1991) 14...♙d8 (so far this is Scekic-Z.Markovici, Kladovo 1994) 15 g5 ♘e8 16 ♘e5 with an unclear position.

d) 10...♘e4 (D) is a controversial move. White must decide whether to accept the pawn sacrifice:

d1) 11 ♘xe4 dxe4 12 ♙xe4 and then:

d11) 12...♙xa3!? 13 bxa3 ♙xa3+ 14 ♘d2 ♙d8+ (14...♙b4+? 15 ♘e2) 15 ♘e2 (Crouch's move 15 ♙d3?? loses to 15...f5) 15...♙b2+ 16 ♙d2!? (16 ♘e1 ♙c3+ 1/2-1/2 M.Quinn-Bruzon,

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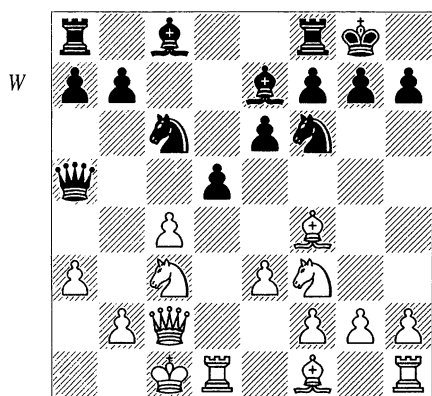


Istanbul Olympiad 2000) 16...♙xd2+ 17 ♘xd2 e5 18 ♙g3 (18 ♙g5? {Timoshchenko-Mateus, Cappelle la Grande 1992} loses to 18...h6! 19 ♙h4 g5 20 ♙g3 ♙g4+! 21 f3 ♙d8 22 ♙e1 f5) 18...♙g4+ 19 ♙xg4 ♙d8 is sharp but looks like a draw: 20 ♘f3 ♙xd2 21 ♙h4 f5 22 ♙g5 ♙d4! 23 exd4 ♙c3+ 24 ♘e2 (not 24 ♙e3?? ♘xd4+) 24...♘xd4+ 25 ♘d1 ♙b3+ 26 ♘e1 ♙c3+ with perpetual check.

d12) 12...f5 13 ♙c2 e5 14 ♘xe5 (14 ♙g3!?) 14...♘xe5 15 ♙xe5 ♙xe3+ 16 fxe3 ♙xe5 (Black is still a pawn down, but he has managed to saddle White with a weak, isolated e3-pawn) 17 ♙d2 ♙e6! (Black focuses on completing his development; Crouch analysed 17...♙e8 18 ♙e2 ♙xe3? {18...♙e6! is stronger} 19 ♙xe3 ♙xe3 20 ♙d8+ ♘f7 21 ♙f3 with a clear advantage for White) 18 ♙d4 ♙c7 (18...♙a5!?) 19 ♙d6 ♙f7 and Black has good compensation for the pawn.

d2) 11 ♘b5! (declining the offer is best, because the knight is able to create havoc on the queenside thanks to White's control over the c7-square) 11...a6 12 ♘c7 e5 13 ♙xd5! ♘f6 (13...f5? 14 ♙xe5 ♘xe5 15 ♙xe5 ♙a7 {15...♙b8 16 ♘xa6 wins for White} 16 ♘d5 and White soon won in Kasparov-Vaganian, European Team Ch, Debrecen 1992) 14 ♙xe5! ♘xe5 15 ♙xe5 ♙a7 (15...♙b8 16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 ♙xb8 is winning for White) 16 ♙xf6 ♙xc7 (16...gxf6 loses to 17 ♘d5) 17 ♘g5 g6 18 h4! gives White a very dangerous attack; for example, 18...♙c6 19 ♙c3 b6 20 h5 h6 (20...♙e7 loses to 21 ♘xh7) 21 ♘f3 g5 22 ♘g5! hxg5 23 h6 ♙f5 24 h7+ ♙xh7 25 ♙c2 followed by mate.

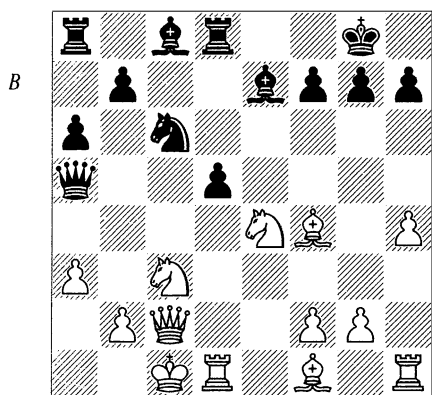
We now return to 10...♙e7 (D):



11 g4

White's most aggressive alternative is 11 h4 (this was another important Kasparov novelty, by which White controls the g5-square for his minor pieces and creates a retreat-square for his dark-squared bishop) 11...a6 (another idea is 11...f8 12 d2 dxc4 13 dxc4 fxd1+ 14 fxd1 f8 15 fxd8+ dxd8 16 e2 with a slight endgame advantage for White in Topalov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2007; the game was eventually drawn) and now:

a) 12 d5?! f8 13 cxd5 exd5 14 e4 dxe4 15 dxe4 (D) (after 15 e4 c4 f5 16 dxd5 d3 17 f3 d3 18 h1 White's attack has run out of steam) and now:



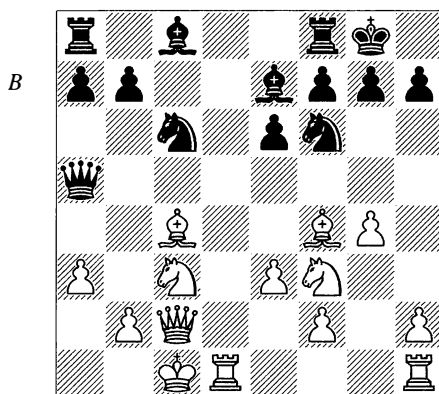
al) Black is doing well after 15...dxe4 16 fxd8+ dxd8! (the knight recapture is an improvement over 16...f8 17 fxe4 g6 with equal chances, Gelfand-Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1998) 17 f4 (Karolyi-J.Barlow, ICCF e-mail

2000) and now Karolyi analyses 17...f4! 18 f4a4 d6 19 d6 f4 20 f4a8 e5 with complications favourable to Black.

a2) 15...f5! (this seems even better; Tibor Karolyi's article in *NIC Yearbook 59* highlighted the strength of the bishop *intermezzo* and since then it has been played in a few e-mail games) 16 f6+ f5 17 f5 f5 e3 18 bxc3 f4a3+ 19 f1 (Gornoi-Dimitriadis, IECG e-mail 2002) 19...f3+ 20 f1 f3+ 21 f2 f1+ 22 f1 f4 23 e3 f8 is the main line of Karolyi's analysis. Black has a crushing attack as the white king will soon perish from overexposure. White is clearly in need of some fresh ideas in this line.

b) 12 d2 b5! 13 cxd5 (13 cxb5? axb5 14 e5 b7 followed by ...f8 is a promising pawn sacrifice for Black because White's king is on the wrong side of the board) 13...exd5 14 d3 f6 is comfortable for Black, who will generate queenside threats with ...e6 and ...f8.

11...dxc4 12 e4 (D)



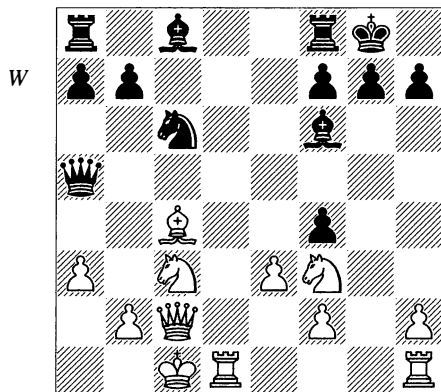
12...e5

The most principled move: Black advances in the centre to counter White's wing attack. Alternatives:

a) 12...f4 13 f4g1 f5 14 h3 f6 (not 14...f5? losing a piece: 15 f5 e5 16 e2 f3 17 f3) 15 e2 (White can play on with the speculative 15 f3! f8 16 f8g1 with good compensation for the pawn) 15...f5 16 d3 f5 led to a draw by repetition in Vera-Campora, Coria del Rio 2001.

b) 12...a6 13 g5 ♖h5 14 ♙d3 g6 (Black sets up a kingside blockade; the h5-knight prevents White from advancing his h-pawn) 15 ♙e4 e5! 16 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 17 ♙d5 ♗c7 18 ♙xe5 ♙e6 and Black's bishop-pair provides reasonable compensation for the pawn, Khalifman-Onishchuk, Russian Team Ch, Togliatti 2003.

13 g5 exf4 14 gxf6 ♙xf6 (D)



White has a major decision to make: which piece should occupy the d5-square?

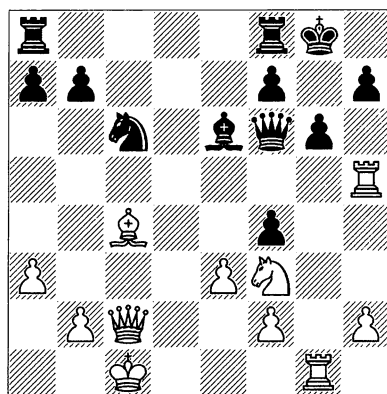
15 ♖d5

Insufficient is 15 ♙d5?! ♗c7 16 ♙h5 g6 17 ♖d5 ♗d8 18 ♙g1 ♙e6 (18...♙g7? 19 ♙xg6! hxg6 20 ♗xg6 fxg6 21 ♖e7# – Crouch) 19 ♖xf6+ (19 ♖g5 ♙xg5 20 ♙hxg5 fxe3! {after 20...♙xd5? 21 ♙xd5 ♙g7 Black has just a slight advantage, Libeau-A.Hoffman, Biel open 1993} 21 fxe3 ♙c8 with an extra pawn and a clear plus for Black; note that White's build-up along the g-file proves to be an illusion after 22 ♙xg6+? fxg6 23 ♙xg6+ ♙f7!, when Black wins) 19...♗xf6 (D), and now:

a) 20 ♙xe6 ♗xe6! (20...fxe6? 21 ♖g5 ♗f5 with roughly equal chances, M.Gurevich-O.Jakobsen, Copenhagen 2001) 21 ♖g5 ♗a2 22 ♖xh7 (Gyimesi-Zumsande, Pardubice 2003) 22...♖e5!! (I think White is just lost after this move) 23 ♙xe5 (23 ♖xf8 ♗a1+ wins for Black) 23...♙ac8 24 ♙c5 ♗a1+ 25 ♖d2 ♙fd8+ 26 ♖e2 ♙xc5 27 ♖f6+ ♙g7 and Black wins.

b) 20 ♖g5! ♙fc8 21 ♖xe6 fxe3 22 ♙f5 ♖d4! 23 ♙xf6 ♖xc2 24 ♖xc2 ♙xc4+ 25 ♖d3 ♙c6 and Black will emerge from the complications with an extra pawn.

W



15...♖e7 16 ♙hg1

The most common move-order is 16 ♖xf6+ gxf6 17 ♙hg1+ ♖h8 – 16 ♙hg1 ♖h8 17 ♖xf6 gxf6.

16...♖h8

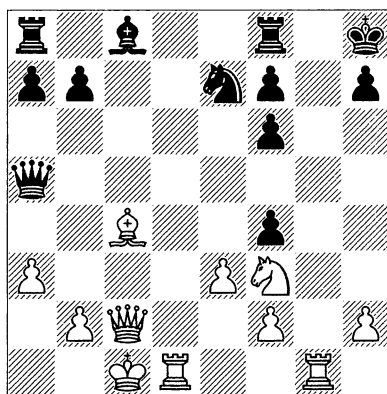
No one has possessed the courage to try 16...♖xd5!? 17 ♙xd5 ♗c7, and then:

a) 18 ♙h5 ♙d8! 19 ♙xh7+ (19 ♙h6!?) 19...♖f8 20 ♗c2 g6 favours Black thanks to his powerful bishop-pair.

b) 18 ♖g5 g6 (18...♙xg5?? 19 ♙dxg5 g6 20 ♙xg6+ leads to mate) 19 ♙c5 ♗b6 with sharp play.

17 ♖xf6 gxf6 (D)

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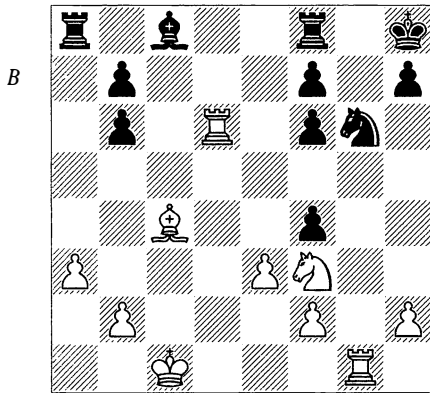


18 e4

White takes control of the f5-square to prevent one of Black's minor pieces from using it. The downside of the pawn advance is that it shuts off White's access to the kingside. Alternatives:

a) 18 ♖d4 fxe3 19 fxe3 ♜e5 20 ♜b1 ♕f5 21 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 22 ♜d5 (so far this is Falatowicz-P.Beckett, ICCF corr. 2005) 22... ♜xe3 23 ♜xe5 ♜xc2 24 ♜e7 (24 ♜e4!?) 24... ♜d4 25 ♜xb7 ♜f3 26 ♜g2 ♜e5 with an equal endgame.

b) 18 ♜e4 ♜g6 19 ♜d4 ♜b6 20 ♜xb6 axb6 21 ♜d6 (D) and now:



b1) 21...fxe3 22 fxe3 ♜a5 (22... ♜e5 23 ♜xe5 fxe5 24 ♜xb6 favours White thanks to his more active pieces, Alves-Wengierow, ICCF e-mail 2002) 23 ♜d2 (23 ♜xb6 ♜c5 24 b3 ♕e6 {24... ♜e5 25 ♜xe5 fxe5 26 ♜b2 with a slight advantage for White, S.Ivanov-Aleksandrov, Leningrad 1990} 25 ♜d2 ♜e5 is equal according to Khalifman) 23... ♜f5 24 ♕e2 (24 ♜f1 ♜c5 25 ♕d3 ♜c6 26 ♜xc6 bxc6 with equal chances, Kasparov-Khalifman, Reggio Emilia 1991/2) 24... ♜e5 25 ♜f1!? (an interesting attempt to squeeze something out of this endgame; 25 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 was assessed as equal by Khalifman in *Informator* 53) 25... ♜g8 26 e4 ♜xf3+ 27 ♕xf3 is slightly better for White, Osbahr-Salzmann, ICCF e-mail 2000.

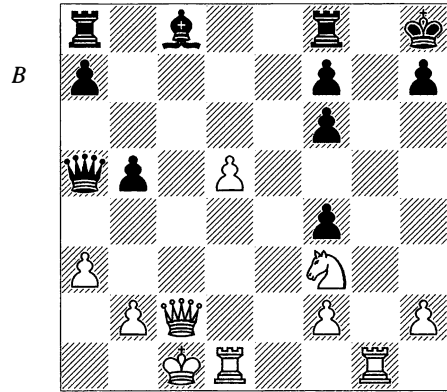
b2) 21... ♕h3!? (Black clears the back rank so as to connect his rooks) 22 ♕d5 fxe3 23 fxe3 ♜ac8+ 24 ♜b1 ♜cd8 (Black returns the extra pawn to exchange off White's active rook) 25 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 26 ♕xf7 (26 ♕xb7 ♜e5 is fine for Black) 26... ♕f5+ 27 ♜a2 ♕e4 leading to an equal endgame, Beliavsky-Yusupov, Dortmund 1998.

18...b5

This queenside thrust has been played in all of the half-dozen high-level games to reach this

position. Another idea is 18... ♕e6!? 19 ♕xe6 fxe6 20 ♜b3 ♜a6 21 ♜b1 ♜ad8 with sharp play.

19 ♕d5 ♜xd5 20 exd5 (D)



20...♕g4

Alternatives:

a) 20...b4 21 axb4 ♜a1+ 22 ♜d2 and then:

a1) 22... ♜a2 23 ♜c3 ♜xd5+ 24 ♜c1 ♜e6 25 ♜g5 ♜e7 (!' – Crouch) 26 ♜xh7! ♕e6 (26... ♜xh7 27 ♜d5 ♜h6 28 ♜f3 with a mating attack) 27 ♜xf8 ♜c8 28 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 29 ♜d3 ♜xc3+ 30 bxc3 favours White because his rooks are superior to the black queen.

a2) 22... ♜a6 23 ♜c6 ♜d8 24 ♜c3 leads to sharp play, and has been tried several times. One high-level example is Anand-Kramnik, Advanced Chess rapid match (game 4), Leon 2002.

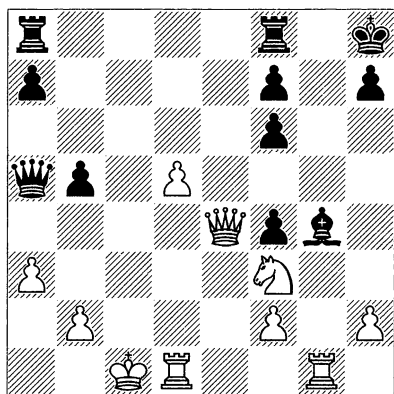
b) 20... ♕d7 and then:

b1) 21 ♜e4 ♜c7+ 22 ♜b1 ♜d6 23 ♜d4 ♜ad8 24 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 25 ♜xf4 ♕c8 with an equal endgame, Bosiocic-Glud, Iraklion 2004.

b2) 21 ♜b1 b4 (21... ♜b6 22 ♜e4 ♜d6 – 21 ♜e4 ♜c7+ 22 ♜b1 ♜d6) 22 ♜d4 ♜g8 with equal chances, Kramnik-Karpov, Amber blind-fold, Monte Carlo 1998. According to Sadler, during the post-mortem Karpov suggested the interesting idea 22...bxa3!? 23 ♜xf4 f5 (not 23...axb2?? 24 ♜xh7+!! ♜xh7 25 ♜h4#), when I think White's safest choice is 24 ♜c3+! ♜xc3 25 bxc3 ♜ab8+ 26 ♜a1, with chances to make use of the connected passed pawns in the endgame.

21 ♜e4 (D)

B

**21...♙c7+**

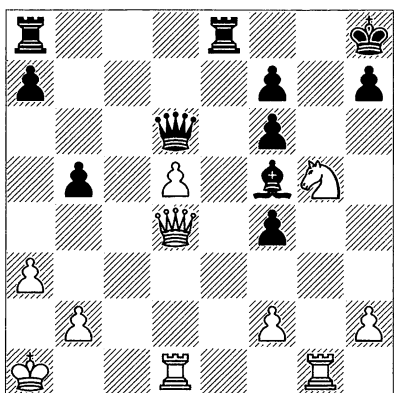
Black needs to retain his f4-pawn. White makes progress after 21...♙h5? 22 ♖xf4 ♙g6 23 ♖xf6+ ♗g8 24 ♔d4 (24 ♔d3 is also good) 24...♖ac8+ 25 ♔c6 with a clear plus for White thanks to the powerful d5-pawn.

22 ♖b1 ♖fe8 23 ♖d4!

Mamedyarov vigorously pursues the attack. The passive 23 ♖d3? ♙h5 24 ♖a1 ♖d6! favours Black as his king is safe and he is threatening to break open the queenside with ...b4.

23...♙f5+ 24 ♖a1 ♖d6 25 ♔g5! (D)

B

**25...♖e7?**

Tregubov defends his f7-pawn by keeping his rook stationed on the open e-file, but there is a tactical flaw. The general rule of thumb in such positions is that the defender should try to keep his pieces as active as possible, but this position is an exception. Black must play the visually passive but tactically resilient 25...♖f8!

26 ♔e4 (26 ♔e6?? fxex6 defends the f6-pawn; this is the benefit of having the rook situated behind the pawn) 26...♙xe4 27 ♖xe4 ♖g8 with just a slight advantage for White. The passed d-pawn is more potent than the tripled f-pawns, but it is not easy for White to make progress.

26 ♔e6! ♖e5

No relief is offered by 26...♖e6 27 dxe6 ♖xd4 28 ♖xd4 fxe6 29 ♖xf4 ♔d8 30 ♖f3, when White has a decisive material advantage.

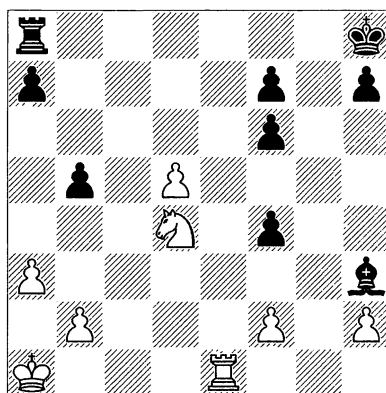
27 ♖ge1

Mamedyarov simplifies into a winning endgame. He could also decide matters with 27 ♖b4 ♖e8 (27...♖ae8 loses to 28 ♔g7) 28 ♔del a5 29 ♖d2 ♙e4 30 ♔c5, winning the pinned bishop.

27...♖xd4 28 ♔xd4 ♖xe1 29 ♖xe1 ♙h3 (D)

Black's isolated f-pawns quickly disappear after 29...♔d7 30 ♖e7 ♔d8 31 ♖xf7 ♙h3 32 ♖xf6 ♔xd5 33 ♖xf4, when White has a solid extra pawn.

W

**30 ♔xb5**

The rest is a mop-up operation as Black's tripled f-pawns are no match for White's powerful passed d-pawn.

30...♔d8 31 ♔d1 ♔d7 32 ♔c3 ♗g7 33 d6 ♙e6 34 ♔e4 ♔d8 35 ♔c5 ♙d7 36 b4 ♗f8 37 ♗b2 ♙e8 38 ♔c3 ♙e6 39 b5 ♖b8 40 a4 ♖b6 41 ♗b4 ♙d7 42 ♔e1+ ♔d8 43 ♖g1 1-0

White wins easily after 43...♖xd6 44 ♔b7+ ♙e7 45 ♔xd6 ♗xd6 46 ♔d1+ ♗c7 47 ♗c5 with a decisive material advantage. The attack was conducted with great energy by the two-time World Junior Champion.

4 Ragozin Defence and Vienna Variation

Introduction

The Ragozin Defence is characterized by the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♙b4. Play typically continues with 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 h6 and now White has the option of either exchanging or retreating his dark-squared bishop. This variation combines elements of the Queen's Gambit Declined and the Nimzo-Indian Defence (Black has played ...♙b4 to pin the white knight on c3). The line is often reached via alternative move-orders such as 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 (White avoids the Nimzo-Indian Defence) 3...d5 4 ♘c3 ♙b4. Black's idea is to use the pin on White's c3-knight to contest the centre and disrupt the smooth development of White's pieces. Black's plan is to follow up with ...c5, ...♞a5 and ...♘e4 to increase the pressure on the pinned c3-knight; White often counters this strategy by playing ♙g5 and capturing Black's f6-knight.

The Westphalia or Manhattan Variation is a subset of the Ragozin arising after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♙b4 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 ♘bd7 (instead of 6...h6). Black supports his f6-knight at the cost of conceding some central control; the knight is less active on the d7-square in comparison to c6, but this difference is offset by Black's superior defence of the f6-knight.

The Vienna Variation arises after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♙b4 5 ♙g5 dxc4. The motivation behind the early pawn capture is as follows: White's standard response to an early ...c5 by Black is to play cxd5 to give Black an isolated d5-pawn, as in the Tarrasch Defence. The Vienna avoids this possibility because Black exchanges White's c4-pawn before playing ...c5. The Vienna frequently leads to positions in which both sets of c- and d-pawns have been exchanged, but despite the freedom for his pieces, Black must work to ensure that he is able to develop his light-squared bishop to a satisfactory square. The main lines of the Vienna have been worked out in depth and it is not unusual to see novelties beyond move 20.

I consider the Ragozin Defence and the related Vienna Variation to be more 'Queen's Gambit Declined' than 'Nimzo-Indian Defence'. However, opinions differ and coverage of these lines is often missing from QGD opening books. Despite their regular use in top-level games, the Ragozin and Vienna are not popular at club level and these lines tend to be underestimated and misunderstood by the typical club player. This makes them an ideal weapon for the enterprising player. Please pay careful attention to move-order issues in these variations as it is very easy to transpose between lines and even to other openings. I have pointed out these transpositions within the game annotations.

The Games

Game 10 (Vaganian-Goldin) is a Ragozin Defence featuring the line 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 h6 7 ♙xf6 ♞xf6. The players quickly exchange queens into a characteristic Ragozin endgame in which both

sides have weaknesses: Black's isolated d5-pawn is offset by White's isolated c3-pawn. Vaganian has a slight development advantage on the queenside and he is able to seize control of the open b-file. Goldin defends tenaciously along the second rank and the double-rook endgame appears to be an easy draw. Vaganian nevertheless finds a creative way to play for a win, but Goldin is able to maintain the balance with further accurate defence.

In **Game 11** (Danielian-Aleksandrov), Black employs the Manhattan Variation and the players follow one of the most critical lines for many moves. Aleksandrov obtains a queenside pawn-majority with an early ...c4 pawn advance. Danielian exchanges his light-squared bishop for one of the black knights in order to break open the centre by playing e4. White's passed d-pawn appears to be powerful, but Black is able to obtain strong counterplay by quickly advancing his queenside pawns. White commits a tactical error and he is quickly overrun on the queenside. This game is a good example of the importance of maintaining the initiative in the middlegame.

Game 12 (Vallejo Pons-Topalov) features a sharp tactical line of the Vienna Variation. Black exchanges his dark-squared bishop for White's c3-knight to saddle White with an isolated c-pawn. White counters by exchanging his dark-squared bishop for Black's f6-knight to create doubled f-pawns and disrupt Black's kingside pawn-cover. Topalov enters a variation in which White has the option of taking a draw by repetition. Vallejo Pons tries a new idea to avoid the draw, but Topalov defends accurately and the players ultimately agree to a different draw by repetition. White's position is easier to play in this line because his king is safe whereas the black king is somewhat exposed, but thus far White has been unable to demonstrate a theoretical advantage.

Game 10 [D38]

Rafael Vaganian – Alexander Goldin *Calvia Olympiad 2004*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙f6 4 ♙f3 ♚b4 (D)

Black can also play 4...dxc4 (this is classified as the Two Knights line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted – ECO code D24), and now:

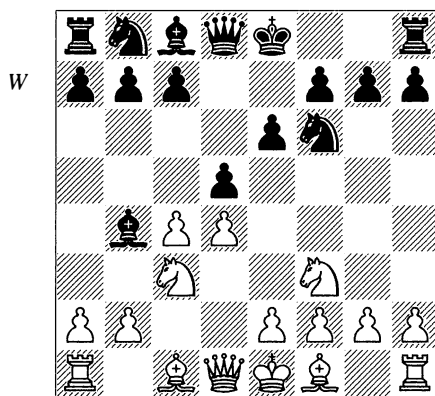
a) 5 ♖a4+ c6 6 ♖xc4 transposes to a side-line of the Semi-Slav; e.g., 6...b5 7 ♖d3 ♙bd7 8 e4 b4 9 ♙a4 ♚b7 10 ♚e3 ♖a5 11 b3 ♚e7 12 ♙d2 0-0 13 f3 c5 with roughly equal chances, Aronian-M.Gurevich, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2005.

b) 5 e3 will lead to standard main lines of the QGA. For instance, 5...a6 6 ♚xc4 b5 7 ♚d3 c5 8 0-0 ♚b7 (ECO code D27) is covered in Chapter 6 of my book *How to Beat 1 d4*.

c) 5 ♔g5 ♚b4 6 e4 transposes to the Vienna Variation; for coverage see Game 12.

d) 5 e4 can be met by 5...♚b4 6 ♔g5, again with a Vienna. Instead, 5...c5 6 d5 (6 ♚xc4 is also playable) is a sharp line of the QGA that

enjoyed some popularity in the 1980s, but White appears to keep some advantage at least.



The bishop pin is the characteristic move of the Ragozin Defence. Play can transpose to the

Nimzo-Indian Defence if White plays e3 without developing his dark-squared bishop outside the pawn-chain. Black will typically seek to put White's centre under pressure with moves such as ...c5, ...d4 and sometimes ...a5. White will normally play g5 and often exchange on d5, seeking to limit Black's possibilities thanks to his threats to the then fixed d5-pawn. White will also seek play on the dark squares if Black exchanges on c3.

The Ragozin often arises via alternative move-orders; for example:

- 1 d4 f6 2 c4 e6 3 f3 d5 4 c3 b4
- 1 d4 f6 2 c4 e6 3 c3 b4 4 f3 d5
- 1 f3 d5 2 d4 f6 3 c4 e6 4 c3 b4

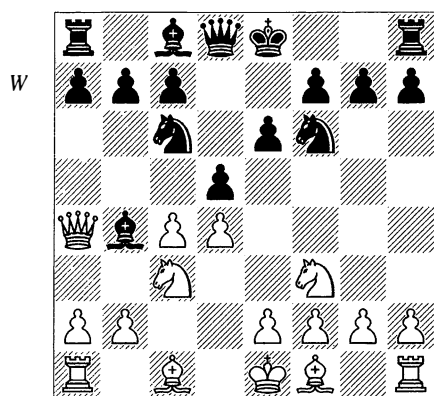
5 cxd5

White has several alternatives here:

a) 5 e3 0-0 transposes to the Nimzo-Indian Defence (*ECO* code E51) and is outside the scope of this book.

b) 5 a3 xc3+ 6 bxc3 dxc4 (6...c5 7 e3 0-0 is another transposition to the Nimzo-Indian Defence – *ECO* code E51) 7 a4+ d7 8 xc4 c6 9 e3 bd7 10 e2 0-0 11 0-0 d4 with equal chances, Chandler-Hess, Dortmund 1980. White's bishop-pair is offset by Black's slight development edge.

c) 5 a4+ (the motivation behind this check is to force Black to interpose with his knight, thereby inhibiting the ...c5 break; White can also delay this check for several moves and later transpose into this line) 5...d6 (*D*) and then:



c1) 6 g5 dxc4 7 e4 d7 8 c2 (8 xc4 dxd4) 8...h6 9 d2 b5! (Black's idea is to

break up White's central pawn duo by exchanging his b-pawn for White's d-pawn) 10 b5 xd2+ 11 dxd2 a6 12 c3 dxd4 13 d1 0-0 14 xc4 b5 with equal chances, Tunik-Ionov, Russian Ch, Oriol 1992. Black's powerful d4-knight balances the potential vulnerability of his split queenside pawns.

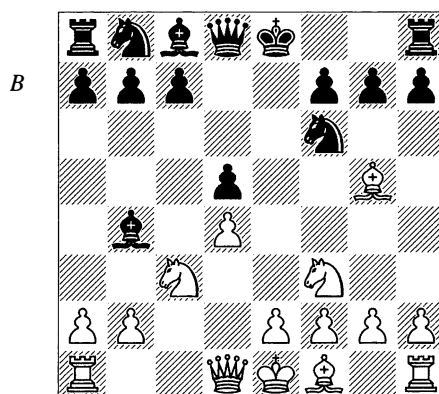
c2) 6 cxd5 exd5 7 g5 h6 8 xf6 (the exchange of minor pieces is safer than 8 h4?! g5 9 g3 d4 10 c1 h5! {White's dark-squared bishop has no place to hide} 11 d5 d7 12 b3 h4! 13 xd5 d6 with complications favourable to Black, Bosboom Lanchava-B.Lalić, Benasque 1999) 8...xf6 9 e3 0-0 10 e2 e6 11 0-0 a6 12 f1 d6 13 d1 d7 with a balanced game; this position has been reached more than 40 times. A recent example is Rustemov-Vallejo Pons, Bundesliga 2005/6.

d) 5 g5 h6 (5...dxc4 is another transposition to the Vienna Variation – for coverage see Game 12) 6 xf6 xf6 7 cxd5 exd5 – 5 cxd5 exd5 6 g5 h6 7 xf6 xf6.

5...exd5

Black retains a strong stake in the centre. 5...dxd5 is rarely seen; e.g., 6 d2 0-0 7 e4 dxc3 8 bxc3 e7 9 d3 with an advantage for White, Kasparov-Larso, Internet simul 1995.

6 g5 (*D*)



6...h6

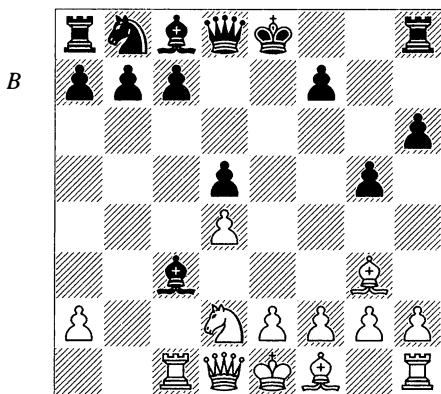
Alternatives:

- a) 6...bd7 is covered in Game 11.
- b) 6...0-0 (this attempt to dispense with ...h6 has recently become popular at the highest levels) 7 e3 c5 8 dxc5 d7 9 c1 a5 10 a3 (10

♟d2 is another sharp line) 10...♙xc3+ 11 ♖xc3 ♟e4 12 b4 ♟xc3 13 ♖a1 ♖a4! (this is more challenging than the passive 13...♖c7?! 14 ♖xc3 ♟e8 15 ♙e2, when White has reasonable compensation for the exchange, Kempinski-Mchedlishvili, Dresden 2006) 14 ♖xc3 a5 15 b5 ♟xc5 16 ♖xc5 ♙d7! (16...♙e6? 17 ♖c1 ♖fc8 18 ♖a1 favours White, Topalov-Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2007) 17 ♖d4 (17 ♖xd5 ♙e6 18 ♖d2 ♖xa3 19 ♙e2 ♖a1+ 20 ♙d1 a4 21 0-0 a3 22 ♖d3 ♖fc8, as given by Mchedlishvili in his *NIC Yearbook 82* article on this line, looks risky for White) 17...♖xa3 18 ♙e2 ♖c1+ 19 ♖d1 ♖fc8!? (Mchedlishvili gives 19...♖c3+ 20 ♖d2 ♖a1+ with a repetition) 20 ♟d4 a4 with great complications. I expect further developments in this line.

7 ♙xf6

This is White's safest choice, by which he obtains central pressure and a lead in development in return for conceding the bishop-pair. The sharp alternative is to retain the dark-squared bishop with 7 ♙h4 g5 8 ♙g3 ♟e4 9 ♟d2! (White offers a pawn sacrifice to accelerate his development; less good is 9 ♖a4+?! ♟c6 10 ♖c1 h5!, transposing to note 'c2' to White's 5th move) 9...♟xc3 10 bxc3 ♙xc3 11 ♖c1 (D).



Now:

a) 11...♙xd4?? 12 ♖a4+ ♟c6 13 ♖xc6 bxc6 14 ♖xd4 0-0 15 h4 is crushing for White.

b) 11...♙xd2+?! 12 ♖xd2 ♟c6 13 h4 g4 14 h5 gives White good compensation for the pawn thanks to his powerful pair of bishops, Adorjan-Kurajica, Sarajevo 1982.

c) 11...♙a5 12 e3 c6 and then:

c1) 13 ♙d3 ♙c7 (13...h5!? 14 h4 gxh4! 15 ♙xh4 ♖d6 also looks reasonable for Black, similar to line 'c2' below) 14 ♙xc7 ♖xc7 15 0-0 f5 16 ♟f3 0-0 17 ♟e5 ♖g7 with roughly equal chances, Wagner-Vallin, French Team Ch, Gonfreville 2006.

c2) 13 h4 gxh4! (I think opening lines on the kingside is a clear improvement over the cooperative 13...g4?! {moving another pawn onto a light square only restricts the scope of Black's light-squared bishop} 14 ♙e2 ♙e6?! {14...♟d7!? 15 ♙xg4 ♟f6 16 ♙xc8 ♖xc8 looks stronger} 15 0-0 ♟d7 16 ♟b3 with reasonable compensation for the pawn, Tukmakov-Inkiov, Khania 1992) 14 ♙xh4 ♖d6 with roughly equal chances. Black's kingside pawns are split, but he does have an extra pawn and he can use the open g-file to put pressure on White's king.

d) 11...♙b2 (the idea behind this move is to force the white rook to an inferior square) and here:

d1) 12 ♖c2? ♙xd4 13 ♙xc7 ♖e7 14 ♙d6 ♖xd6 15 ♖xc8+ ♙e7 leaves White with insufficient compensation for the pawn.

d2) 12 ♖xc7 ♟a6 13 ♖c2 ♙xd4 14 e3 ♙g7 15 ♙xa6 bxa6 16 0-0 0-0 17 ♟b3 ♖b6 with equal chances, Stoeck-Izoria, European Ch, Antalya 2004.

d3) 12 ♙xc7 ♖e7 (12...♖d7 13 ♖b1 ♙c3 14 ♙g3!? ♟c6 15 e3 ♖e7 16 ♖c1 ♙xd4 17 ♙b5 ♙d7 18 0-0 gives White good compensation for the pawn, Yakovich-Khenkin, Russia 2005) 13 ♙d6 ♖e6 14 ♖b1 ♙c3 15 ♙a3 ♟c6 16 e3 ♙xd4 has been played in several high-level games; a recent example is Sargissian-Landa, Bundesliga 2005/6. Experience has shown that White's piece activity provides reasonable compensation for the pawn. Black must pay careful attention to the safety of his king because of the advanced position of his kingside pawns.

7...♖xf6 8 ♖b3 (D)

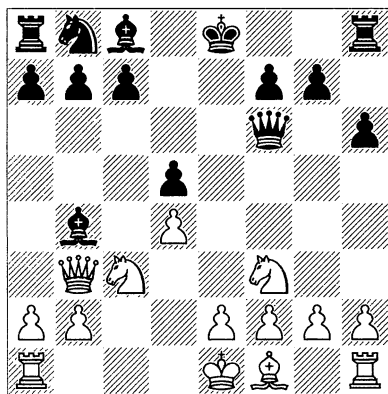
8 ♖a4+ ♟c6 transposes to note 'c2' to White's 5th move.

8...c5

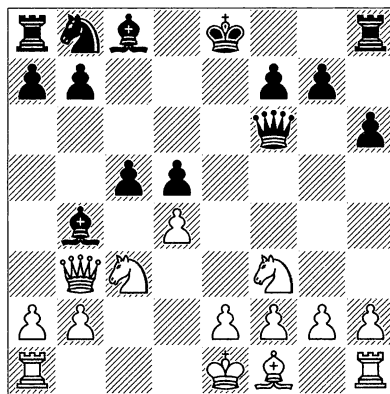
Alternatives:

a) 8...♟c6 (Black offers a pawn sacrifice in exchange for rapid development) 9 e3 0-0 10

B



W



♖xd5 ♠e6 11 ♜b5 a6! (11...♜g6?! {J.Horvath-Bokros, Budapest 2001} 12 ♜d3 ♠f5 13 ♜d2 ♠e4 14 a3 ♠xc3 15 ♜xc3 with a clear plus for White – Ribli) 12 ♜d3 (12 ♜xb7? ♠d5 13 ♜xc7 ♠xf3 14 gxf3 ♜xd4! gives Black a crushing attack as the white king is marooned in the centre) 12...♠a5!? 13 a3 (13 ♠e2 ♜b4 14 ♜d2 ♜xa2 recovers the sacrificed pawn) 13...♠f5 14 ♜d2 with an advantage for White; Black has insufficient compensation for the pawn.

b) 8...♜d6 9 a3 ♠xc3+ 10 ♜xc3 ♠f5 (the position resembles a QGD Exchange Variation with Black's light-squared bishop developed to an active square) 11 e3 ♜d7 12 ♠e2 (12 ♜b4?! {Barsov-Kupreichik, 2nd Bundesliga 1998/9} 12...♜xb4+ 13 axb4 ♠e7 with a structural advantage for Black: White's doubled and isolated b-pawns do not inspire confidence) 12...0-0 13 0-0 a5 with roughly equal chances, Bruzon-Onishchuk, Buenos Aires 2005.

c) 8...♜b6!? (this alternative development scheme is worthy of attention) 9 a3 (9 ♜cl c6 10 a3 ♠a5 11 ♜xb6 ♠xc3+ {not 11...♠xb6? 12 ♜xd5!, when White wins a pawn} 12 ♜xc3 axb6 with an equal endgame, Vigorito-Serper, Reno 2003) 9...♠a5 10 ♜c2 (10 ♜xb6 ♠xc3+ 11 bxc3 axb6 with equal chances) 10...♠f5 11 ♜a4+ (11 ♜xf5? ♜xb2 12 ♜b1 ♜xc3+ 13 ♜d1 0-0 with a crushing development advantage for Black, Portisch-Khenkin, European Clubs Cup, Saint Vincent 2005) 11...♠d7 12 ♜c2 ♠f5 13 ♜d2!? (13 ♜a4+ repeats the position) 13...♜b3 14 e3 0-0 with equal chances.

We now return to 8...c5 (D):

9 e3

White has several alternatives in this position:

a) 9 ♜xd5? (too greedy!) 9...♜c6 10 e3 ♠e6 11 ♜e4 0-0-0 gives Black a strong initiative, A.Geller-Estrin, Leningrad 1955.

b) 9 a3 ♠xc3+ 10 ♜xc3 ♜d7 11 g3!? (White takes aim at the weak d5-pawn; another transposition is 11 e3 0-0 – 9 e3 0-0 10 a3 ♠xc3+ 11 ♜xc3 ♜d7) 11...0-0 12 ♠g2 ♠e8 13 0-0!? (White sacrifices a pawn to exploit Black's lagging development) 13...♜xe2 14 ♜a1 ♠e6 with sharp play, Vaganian-Aleksandrov, Moscow 2002.

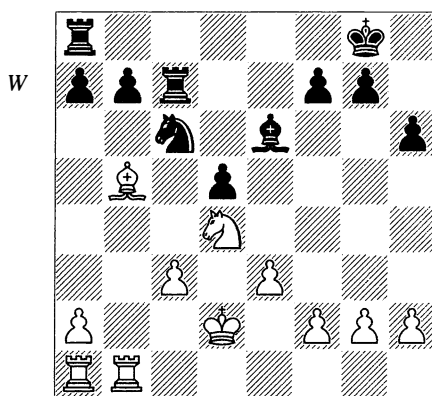
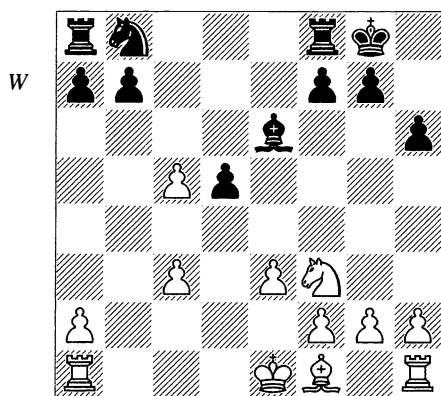
c) 9 dxc5 ♠xc3+ (9...♜c6 10 e3 0-0 11 ♠b5 d4 12 ♠xc6 dxc3 13 ♜xb4 cxb2 14 ♜b1 bxc6 15 0-0!?, with a slight advantage for White thanks to his superior minor piece; this has been played in a half-dozen games, the most recent top-level example being Ivanchuk-Shirov, Amber rapid, Monte Carlo 2004) 10 bxc3 0-0 11 e3 – 9 e3 0-0 10 dxc5 ♠xc3+ 11 bxc3.

9...0-0 10 dxc5 ♠xc3+ 11 ♜xc3

11 bxc3 ♠e6 (11...♜c6?! 12 ♜b5 ♜c7 13 ♜d4 favours White) 12 ♜d4 ♜d7 13 ♜a3 (13 ♜xb7 ♜xc5 14 ♜b2 ♜g5 {14...♜ab8!? 15 ♜c2 ♜fc8 also looks promising for Black} 15 ♜c2 ♜ac8 with good compensation for the pawn, Nikolić-Kacheishvili, European Ch, Ohrid 2001) 13...♜e5!? 14 ♠e2 ♜g6 15 0-0-0 ♜fc8 with a strong initiative for the missing pawn, Gagunashvili-Aleksandrov, European Ch, Batumi 2002.

11...♜xc3+ 12 bxc3 ♠e6 (D)

13 ♠b5!?



White tries to lure Black into weakening the b6-square with ...a6. Another idea behind the bishop move is to aim for a potentially favourable minor-piece endgame by exchanging the bishop for the black knight. Alternatives:

a) 13 Bb1 Qd7 and then 14 Qd4 Qxc5 15 f3 Bfc8 with equal chances, Lapshun-Hoekstra, USA Ch, San Diego 2004, or 14 Bxb7 Qxc5 15 Bb5 Bfc8, again with an even game, Bocharov-Aleksandrov, Russian Team Ch rapid, Sochi 2004. These game fragments illustrate the theme of offsetting weaknesses: the potential vulnerability of Black's isolated d5-pawn is offset by White's isolated c3-pawn.

b) 13 Qd4 Bc8 and here:

b1) 14 c4 Qd7 15 Qe2 Bxc5 16 Qxe6 fxe6 17 Qg4 Qf7 18 cxd5 Bxd5 19 Qd1 Bxd1+ 20 Qxd1 Bc8 was played in K.Rasmussen-Aleksandrov, Gistrup 1996. The position is equal although Black managed to win the game by exchanging rooks and creating a passed pawn on the queenside.

b2) 14 Bb1 Qd7 15 c4 Qxc5 16 Qxe6 fxe6 17 cxd5 exd5 18 Qe2 Qe4 with equal chances, Tregubov-Aleksandrov, Yugoslav Team Ch, Budva 2002.

13...Bc8 14 Qd2

The king move is the most economical method of protecting the c3-pawn. White also clears the first rank to enable his king's rook to enter the game.

14...Bxc5 15 Bxb1 Bc7

Black defends the second rank before completing his development.

16 Qd4 Qc6 (D)

17 Qxc6

Or: 17 Qxc6 bxc6 18 Qd3 Bxd8 is fine for Black; 17 Qxe6 fxe6 is equal.

17...bxc6 18 Bb2 c5 19 Qxe6

White exchanges into a balanced rook endgame as 19 Qf3?! Qf5 favours Black thanks to his well-placed bishop and superior pawn-structure.

19...fxe6 20 Bb1 Qf7 21 Bb7 Bxc6 22 c4 Qe7

Goldin calmly centralizes his king and keeps his pawn-structure intact.

23 cxd5 exd5 24 h4!?

Vaganian advances on the kingside with the idea of fixing Black's kingside pawns.

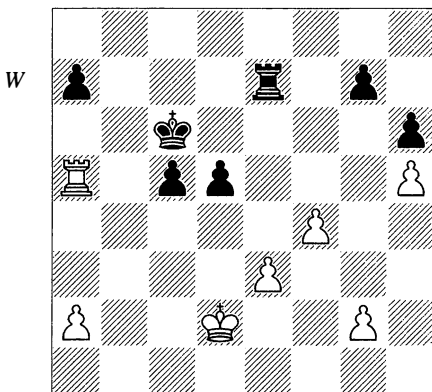
24...Qd6 25 h5 Bf8

A reminder that White's pawns also require defence.

26 f4 Bf8 27 Bb5 Bc7 28 Bxe7

28 Bb3 Qc6 29 Bxe7 Bxe7 is also equal.

28...Bxe7 29 Ba5 Qc6 (D)



30 a4

White is unable to make progress after 30 ♖a6+ ♖b5 31 ♖g6 ♖c4! 32 g4 ♖b7 33 ♖c2 ♖e7 34 ♖d2 ♖b7 when he has nothing better than a draw by repetition.

30...c4 31 g4 ♖b7 32 ♖b5!?

White finds an interesting winning attempt that comes up just short. 32 ♖c2 ♖e7 33 ♖d2 ♖b7 repeats the position.

32...♖xb5 33 axb5+ ♖xb5 34 g5 ♖c6 35 f5 ♖d6

Black must avoid 35...hxg5?? 36 f6 and the h-pawn queens.

36 f6 ♖e6 37 fxg7 ♖f7 38 gxh6 a5 1/2-1/2

Neither side can make progress after 39 ♖c3 ♖g8 (39...a4?? loses to 40 ♖b4) 40 ♖b2 a4 41 ♖c2 a3 42 ♖c3 ♖h7 43 ♖c2 ♖g8 44 ♖c3 ♖h7 with a draw.

Game 11 [D38]

Oganes Danielian – Aleksei Aleksandrov

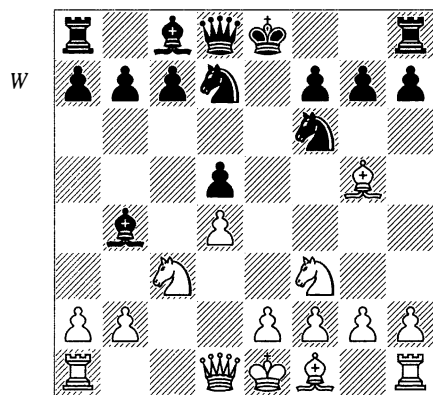
Moscow 2003

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♖b4 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♖g5

For comments on the moves up to this point, see Game 10.

6...♘bd7 (D)

6...h6 was covered in Game 10.

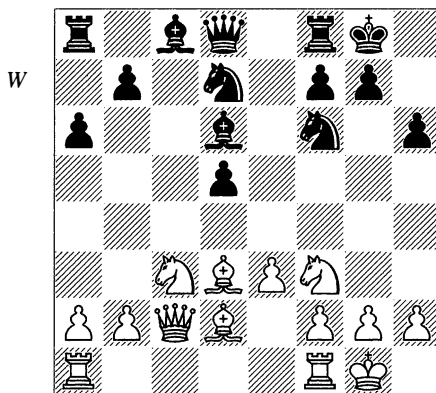


The knight move is often referred to as the Manhattan or Westphalia Variation because several of the participants in the New York 1927 tournament analysed this line while crossing the Atlantic Ocean from Europe aboard the SS *Westphalia*.

7 e3

7 ♖c2!? was popularized by the 14th World Champion Vladimir Kramnik. He won two nice games with the idea during 1993. White's plan is to play in similar fashion to the Classical Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence (1 d4

♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♖b4 4 ♖c2 d5 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♖g5). From the QGD move-order White has committed to ♘f3, whereas Black has played the slightly passive ...♘bd7. White hopes to prove that Black's natural ...c5 pawn-break is not as effective without the knight on c6. A typical continuation is 7...c5 8 dxc5 h6 (8...♖a5 9 ♖d2 ♘xc5 10 a3! {this is more precise than 10 ♖c1 ♘ce4 11 a3 ♘xd2 12 ♖xd2 ♖e7 1/2-1/2 Podgaets-V.Filippov, Moscow 2002} 10...♘e6 11 ♖c1 ♖e7 12 e3 favours White as the black queen is misplaced, Kveinys-Stempin, Polish Team Ch, Bydgoszcz 1990) 9 ♖d2 0-0 10 e3 ♖xc5 11 ♖d3 a6 12 0-0 ♖d6 (D).



White has tried several ideas in this position, but Black has been able to maintain the balance:

a) 13 ♖f5 ♘e5 14 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 is equal.

b) 13 ♖e2 ♗c5 14 ♙c3 (“White has a slight edge” – Khalifman, 2002) 14...♗fe4 15 ♖ad1 (a draw was agreed here in Sulava-B.Kovačević, Rabac 2003) 15...♙f5 is a fully satisfactory Tarrasch-style position for Black, as the potential vulnerability of Black’s d5-pawn is more than offset by his powerful knight outpost on e4.

c) 13 e4 dxe4 14 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♙xe4 ♗f6 16 ♙f5 ♙xf5 17 ♖xf5 ♖c8 18 ♖d3 1/2-1/2 Dreev-Zviagintsev, Poikovsky 2006.

d) 13 ♖fd1 ♗c5 14 ♙f5 ♙e6 with equal chances, Mikhalechishin-Aronian, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

7...c5 8 ♙d3

This is White’s most popular option. He prepares to line up his queen and bishop to take aim at Black’s kingside.

8...♖a5

A dual-purpose move: Black breaks the pin on his f6-knight and increases the pressure on its white counterpart on c3.

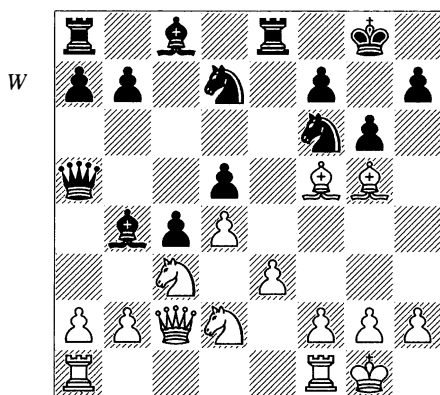
9 ♖c2 c4

Black establishes a queenside pawn-majority with gain of tempo.

10 ♙f5 0-0 11 0-0 ♖e8

Black positions his rook along the half-open e-file in preparation for the battle over control of the e4-square.

12 ♗d2 g6 (D)



13 ♙xd7

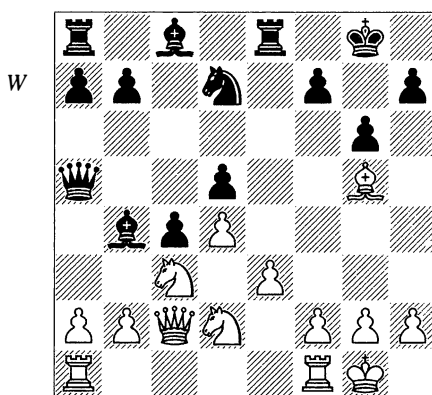
The equally popular alternative is 13 ♙h3 ♙xc3, and then:

a) 14 bxc3 ♗e4 15 ♗xe4 dxe4 (note that White’s g5-bishop is now under attack!) 16

♙xd7 (White hastens to exchange his light-squared bishop for the black knight before Black has the opportunity to preserve the horse with ...♗b6; an exchange of light-squared bishops would favour Black because he could then establish a powerful knight on d5) 16...♙xd7 17 ♙f4 ♙c6 with equal chances in the opposite-coloured bishop middlegame, Sachdev-Ulko, Moscow 2005 and several earlier games.

b) 14 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 15 bxc3 ♗e4 16 ♗xe4 dxe4 17 ♙g4! (White has the opportunity to preserve the bishop-pair because the queens have been exchanged; 17 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 only leads to equal chances in the opposite-coloured bishop endgame, Komarov-Dizdar, Bad Mergentheim 1989) 17...♗b6 18 ♙e2 ♙e6 19 ♖ab1! (seizing the half-open b-file is more precise than 19 a4 ♗d5!) 20 ♖a3 ♖ac8 with equal chances, Cebalo-Arlandi, Saint Vincent 1998) 19...♖ac8 (Black could gain some breathing room for his king by 19...f6!? 20 ♙h4 ♖ac8) 20 ♖fc1 ♖c7 21 f3 with a slight pull for White in Karpov-Milov, Cap d’Agde rapid 2002. Karpov brought home the full point by poking and probing with the bishop-pair.

13...♗xd7 (D)



14 ♖fel

White prepares to break open the centre with e4. Alternatives:

a) 14 h4 (the idea behind the pawn move is to protect the g5-bishop in preparation for the e4 pawn-break) and now:

a1) 14...♗b6 15 ♗b3 ♖a6 (Black must avoid 15...cxb3?? 16 axb3 ♙xc3 17 ♖xa5 ♙xa5 18

♖c5 ♗d2 19 ♖d1, when White wins the wayward bishop) 16 ♖c5 ♖a5 17 a4 (17 ♖b3 repeats the position) 17...♗f5 18 e4 dxe4 19 ♖xb7 ♖a6 20 ♖c5 ♖c8 1/2-1/2 Kempinski-Tischbierek, Bundesliga 2002/3.

a2) 14...♗xc3!? 15 bxc3 ♖b6 16 f3 ♖a4! (this is a common manoeuvre in this line: Black improves the position of his queen and increases his grip on the light squares; the black queen is no longer needed on a5 because White has expended a tempo to protect his dark-squared bishop in preparation for the e4 pawn-break, so that the capture ...dxe4 would no longer uncover a lateral attack on the g5-bishop) 17 ♖c1 (17 ♖b1 ♖a3 18 ♖c1 {Pinter-Greenfeld, Beersheba 1991} 18...f6 19 ♗f4 ♗d7 with equal chances) 17...♗f5 18 ♖e1 ♖c6 with a comfortable position for Black as he has prevented White from achieving the e4 pawn-break, I.Sokolov-Sosonko, Dutch Ch, Amsterdam 1996.

b) 14 f3 (White tries to build a big centre) 14...♖b6 15 ♗f4 (White must avoid 15 ♖b3? cxb3 16 axb3 ♗xc3 17 ♖xa5 ♗xa5 with a material advantage for Black; note that in comparison to line 'a' above, 18 ♖c5 ♗d2 attacks the e3-pawn and after 19 ♖f2 ♗f5 Black has a decisive material advantage; 15 ♖ae1 – 14 ♖ae1 ♖b6 15 f3) 15...♗xc3 16 bxc3 ♖a4 17 ♖b2 ♗f5 18 ♖fe1 ♗d3 with a balanced game, Gofshstein-Inkirov, Arco 2000. Black has successfully activated his light-squared bishop.

c) 14 a3 (the idea here is to clarify the position of the minor pieces before deciding how to activate the rooks) 14...♗xc3 and now:

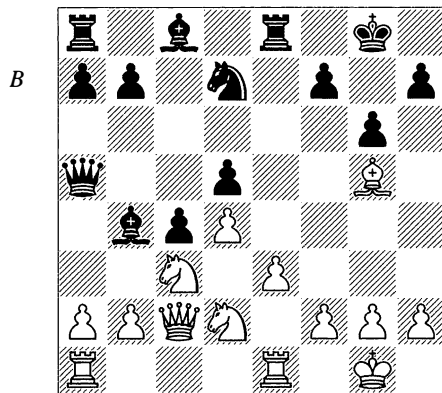
c1) A balanced opposite-coloured bishop endgame arises after 15 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 16 bxc3 ♖b6 17 a4 (17 f3 ♖a4 18 ♖ac1 f6 19 ♗h6 {Tregubov-R.Bagirov, Krasnodar 2001} 19...b5 with a slight initiative for Black, who can follow up with a timely ...a5 and ...b4 pawn-break) 17...♗d7 18 a5 ♖a4 with equal chances, Ruck-Milov, European blitz Ch, Panormo 2002.

c2) 15 bxc3 ♖b6 16 f3 ♗d7 17 ♖fe1 ♗a4 18 ♖c1 ♗c6 19 ♖a2 ♖e6 is equal, Kasparov-Tatai, Dubai Olympiad 1986.

d) 14 ♖ae1 (White shifts his heavy artillery to the kingside in preparation for opening the centre with the f3 and e4 pawn advance) 14...♖b6 15 f3 ♗d7 16 ♗h4 (White is not yet

ready to initiate action in the centre as 16 e4? dxe4 uncovers a lateral attack on the g5-bishop) 16...♗xc3 17 bxc3 ♖a4 18 ♖b1 f5 19 ♖f2 ♖b6 with equal chances, A.Graf-Godena, European Ch, Warsaw 2005.

We now return to 14 ♖fe1 (D):



14...♖b6

Aleksandrov maintains the queenside tension. Another option is 14...♗xc3 15 bxc3 ♖b6 16 f3 ♗d7 (16...♖a4?! is less effective here as after 17 ♖b2 White is poised to play e4) 17 ♗h6 ♖e6 with sharp play, Mamedyarov-R.Bagirov, Baku 2005.

15 h4?!

The pawn advance is inaccurate here because it does not prevent Black from developing his light-squared bishop to an active square. Safer is 15 f3 ♖a4!? (15...♗d7 16 a3 ♗xc3 17 bxc3 – 14 a3 ♗xc3 15 bxc3 ♖b6 16 f3 ♗d7 17 ♖fe1) and then:

a) 16 ♖ac1?! ♖xc3 17 bxc3 ♗a3 18 ♖b1 ♗f5 19 e4 ♗d7 with an advantage for Black in Kamsky-J.Polgar, Dos Hermanas 1995. Note that after 20 ♖xb7? ♗c6 21 ♖bb1 ♗a4 Black wins a piece.

b) 16 ♖xa4 ♗xd2 17 ♖e2 ♗b4 is comfortable for Black as his bishop-pair has plenty of scope.

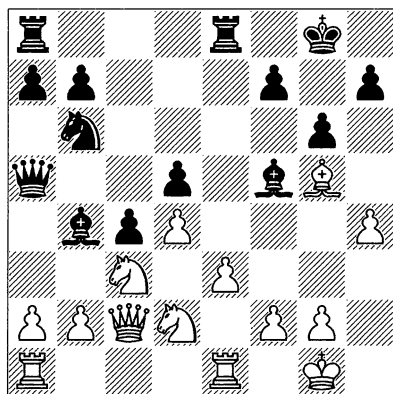
c) 16 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 17 ♖xa4 ♗xd2 18 ♖e2 ♗b4 with equal chances.

15...♗f5 (D)

16 e4

White initiates central action. The alternative is 16 ♖c1 ♖ac8 17 a3 ♗f8 with a solid

W



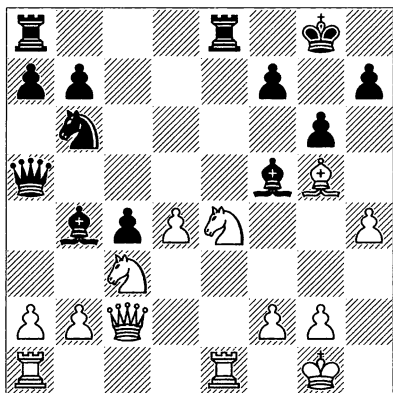
position for Black, who has a healthy pair of bishops, while it is difficult for White to break through in the centre.

16...dxe4

Black could consider 16...♙xc3 17 bxc3 ♙xe4, when Black wins a pawn) 17...dxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘d5 with an advantage for Black thanks to his well-placed minor pieces, the pressure on the e-file and the vulnerability of White's c3-pawn.

17 ♘dxe4 (D)

B



17...♘d7?!

Black surrenders to the impulse to cover the f6-square, but this retreat is premature; the knight should stay put to keep an eye on the d5-square. Alternatives:

a) 17...♙xe4 18 ♙xe4 (18 ♘xe4? loses to 18...♙xe1 19 ♘f6+ ♖g7) 18...♙xc3 19 bxc3 ♙xe4 20 ♙xe4 ♙xc3 21 ♙e1 with counterplay.

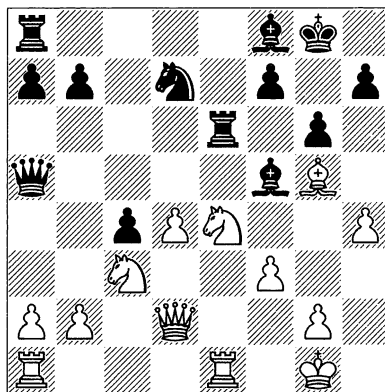
b) 17...♙e6!? 18 a3 ♙f8 19 ♙ad1 ♘d5 favours Black as he has blockaded White's d4-pawn.

18 f3 ♙f8

Black prepares to shift his dark-squared bishop to the long diagonal, while also clearing a path for the advance of the b-pawn.

19 ♙d2 ♙e6 (D)

W



20 d5?!

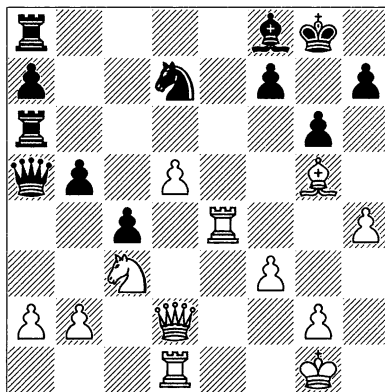
White should exploit the momentary vulnerability of Black's pieces with 20 g4! ♙xe4 21 fxe4, when he is still in the game; for example, 21...♙d6!? 22 ♙e3 ♘e5 23 ♙g2 ♘d3 24 ♙f1 and White has strong counterplay along the f-file.

20...♙a6 21 ♙ad1 ♙xe4 22 ♙xe4

The alternative recapture 22 fxe4 ♘e5 23 ♙f1 ♙g7 favours Black because of his well-placed minor pieces.

22...b5 (D)

W



23 ♖e7?

This loses quickly, but White also has problems after the more resilient 23 a3 (preventing the advance of the black b-pawn) 23...♟c5 24 ♙e2 ♟d3 25 ♟e4 ♙b6+ 26 ♙e3 (26 ♙e3 ♙d8 is annoying) 26...♙xe3+ 27 ♙xe3 f5 28 ♟c3 ♙e8, with strong pressure for Black.

23...b4! 24 ♟e2

No relief is offered by 24 ♟b1 (24 ♙xf8 bxc3 costs White a piece) 24...♙xe7 25 ♙xe7

♙c5+ 26 ♙e3 ♙xa2 with a decisive advantage; White's position collapses after the loss of the critical a2-pawn.

24...♙xe7 25 ♙xe7 ♙c5+ 26 ♙e3 ♙xe3+ 27 ♙xe3 ♙xa2

Black has won a pawn and infiltrated White's porous queenside.

28 b3 c3 0-1

The advanced c-pawn will eventually cost White a piece.

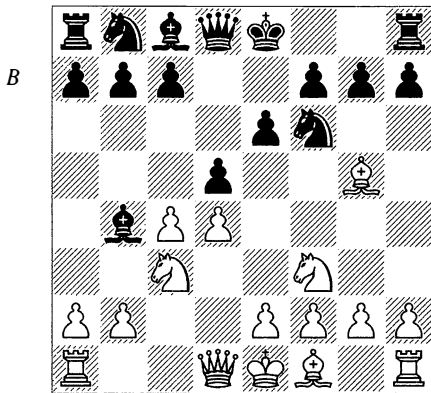
Game 12 [D39]

Francisco Vallejo Pons – Veselin Topalov

Morelia/Linares 2006

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♟f3 d5 4 ♟c3 ♙b4 5 ♙g5 (D)

The pin is White's sharpest choice. 5 cxd5 was covered in Games 10 and 11.



5...dxc4

This is the starting position of the Vienna Variation. The motivation behind Black's last move is as follows:

- White normally responds to Black's natural freeing move ...c5 with cxd5 to give Black an isolated d5-pawn. By capturing White's c4-pawn first, Black avoids this possibility.
- Black seeks to liquidate his c- and d-pawns in order to create open lines and manoeuvring room for his pieces.
- The exchange of centre pawns increases the effectiveness of Black's b4-bishop. Black

can follow up with a timely ...♙a5 to increase the pressure on White's queenside.

This position contains a labyrinth of transpositions so let's briefly outline the alternatives:

a) 5...♟bd7 6 cxd5 exd5 – 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 ♟bd7 (see Game 11).

b) 5...h6 6 ♙xf6 (6 ♙h4 dxc4 is another sharp line) 6...♙xf6 and now several possibilities transpose into lines we have already covered:

b1) 7 cxd5 exd5 – 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 h6 7 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 (see Game 10).

b2) 7 ♙b3 c5 8 cxd5 exd5 – 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 h6 7 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 8 ♙b3 c5 (see Game 10).

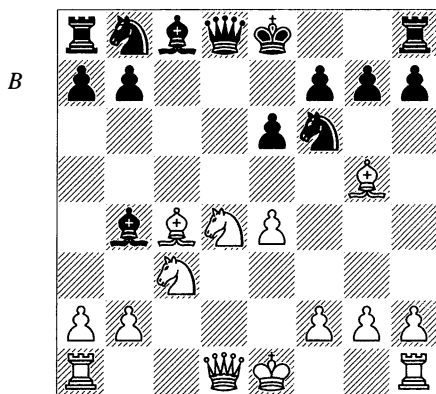
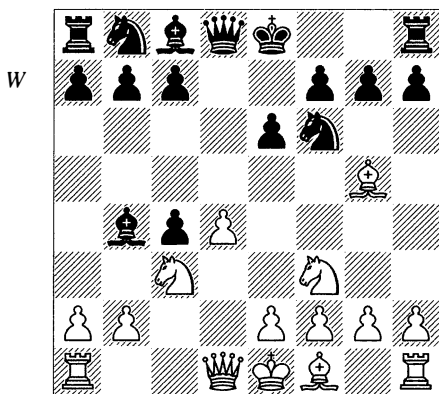
b3) 7 ♙a4+ ♟c6 8 cxd5 exd5 – 5 ♙a4+ ♟c6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♙g5 h6 8 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 (see note 'c2' to White's 5th move in Game 10).

b4) 7 e3 0-0 8 ♙cl dxc4 9 ♙xc4 c5 10 0-0 cxd4 11 ♟xd4 ♙d7 12 ♙b3 ♟c6 13 ♙fd1 (13 ♟ce2 ♙e7 14 ♟xc6 ♙xc6 15 ♟d4 ♙ac8 with equal chances, Karpov-G.Georgadze, Spanish Team Ch, Cala Galdana 2001) 13...♙e7 14 ♙b5 ♙xc3 15 ♙xc3 1/2-1/2 Kacheishvili-Izoria, US Open Ch, Chicago 2006. A possible continuation is 15...♟xd4 16 ♙xd4 ♙xb5 17 ♙xb5 ♙fd8 with equal chances in the major-piece endgame.

We now return to 5...dxc4 (D):

6 e4

White grabs the lion's share of the centre and prepares to recapture the c-pawn. Alternatives:



a) 6 e3 b5 7 a4 c6 transposes to a sideline of the Semi-Slav (*ECO* code D44), an opening not covered in this book.

b) 6 ♖a4+ ♜c6 – 5 ♖a4+ ♜c6 6 ♙g5 dxc4 (see note ‘c1’ to White’s 5th move in Game 10).

c) 6 a3!? (White expends a tempo to clarify the situation on the queenside; this interesting idea deserves further tests) 6...♙xc3+ 7 bxc3 b5 (Black elects to hang on to the extra pawn; a quieter alternative is 7...c5 8 ♖a4+ ♙d7 9 ♖xc4 cxd4 10 cxd4 0-0 11 e3 ♜c6 with equal chances, Mamedyarov-Aronian, Spanish Team Ch, San Sebastian 2006) 8 e4 h6 9 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 (9...gxf6 10 a4 c6 11 ♙e2 ♙g8 12 0-0 looks promising for White as the black king has no safe haven) 10 a4 c6 11 ♙e2 gives White adequate compensation for the pawn as Black will have to unravel his queenside, I.Sokolov-Vasilevich, Reykjavik 2006. I anticipate further developments in this line.

6...c5

Alternatives:

a) 6...b5 7 a4 c6 transposes to a sharp line of the Semi-Slav (*ECO* code D44) and is beyond the scope of this book. Black has been struggling in this line in recent practice.

b) 6...h6 7 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 8 ♙xc4 0-0 9 0-0 ♜d8 10 ♖e2, with a development plus for White, was first played in Chernin-Frias, Saint John 1988.

7 ♙xc4

The bishop development is White’s most popular move here. The sharp 7 e5 is another possibility.

7...cxd4 8 ♜xd4 (D)

Please do not be fooled by the near-symmetrical pawn-structure found during the opening stages of the Vienna Variation; the aggressive deployment of Black’s dark-squared bishop typically leads to a sharp struggle. Black usually exchanges his dark-squared bishop for White’s c3-knight, and White often counters by exchanging on f6. This creates imbalance because both sides are left with structural weaknesses.

8...♙xc3+

This is Black’s most popular choice at this juncture. Alternatives:

a) 8...♜bd7 (Black lends support to his f6-knight, but he must be wary of piece sacrifices on e6) 9 0-0 ♙xc3 10 bxc3 ♖a5 11 ♙h4 0-0 12 ♜e1 ♜e5 (12...♖c5 13 ♙xe6! fxe6 14 ♜xe6 ♖c6 15 ♖b3 ♙h8 16 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 17 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 18 ♜ad1 gives White a clear advantage, Tukmakov-Khuzman, Sverdlovsk 1987; White’s rook plus two pawns are stronger than Black’s two minor pieces because the white rooks are ideally placed to support a kingside pawn advance) 13 ♙f1 ♜g6 14 ♙xf6 gxf6 15 ♖f3 with an advantage for White, Beliavsky-Ki.Georgiev, Turin Olympiad 2006. White has good prospects of exploiting Black’s weakened kingside.

b) 8...♙d7 (Black develops a piece and prepares ...♜c6) 9 0-0 ♜c6 10 ♜c1 and now:

b1) 10...a6 11 a3 (11 ♜e1!?) 11...♙e7 12 ♜f3 gave White a slight pull in Azmaiparashvili-Morozevich, Madrid 1996. This was the stem game for the 8...♙d7 line.

b2) 10...h6 11 ♙f4 0-0 12 e5 ♖b8 13 ♙g3 ♜xe5 14 ♜e1 ♙d6 15 ♜db5 with favourable

complications for White, Kramnik-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1997.

b3) 10...0-0 11 ♖b3 (11 ♖f3!?, to support the e5 pawn advance, is another idea) 11...♗e5 12 ♖e2 ♖c6 13 f3 ♗b8 14 a3 (14 ♗d4!?) 1/2-1/2 Kramnik-Anand, Linares 1997. A possible continuation is 14...♖e7 15 f4 ♗d8 16 ♗e1 ♖d3 17 ♖xd3 ♗xd3 18 e5 ♖d5 with roughly equal chances.

c) 8...♗a5 and then:

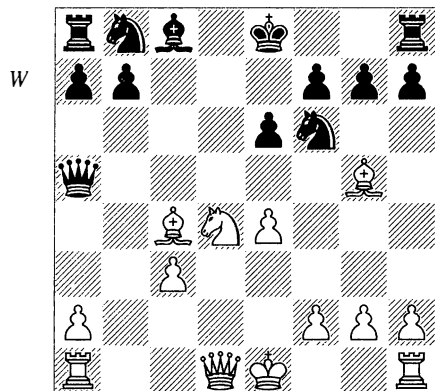
c1) 9 ♖xf6 ♖xc3+ 10 bxc3 – 8...♖xc3+ 9 bxc3 ♗a5 10 ♖xf6.

c2) 9 ♖b5+ ♖d7 10 ♖xf6 gxf6 11 0-0 (one of the ideas behind delaying the capture of the c3-knight is that White drops a piece after 11 ♗b3?? ♖xb5) 11...♖xc3 12 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 13 bxc3 – 8...♖xc3+ 9 bxc3 ♗a5 10 ♖b5+ ♖d7 11 ♖xf6 gxf6 12 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 13 0-0.

c3) 9 ♖d2 ♗c5 10 ♖b5+ ♖d7 (10...♖bd7 is another sharp line) 11 ♖b3 ♗e7 12 ♖d3 (retaining the light-squared bishops is more challenging than 12 ♗e2 ♖xb5 13 ♗xb5+ ♖c6 with equal chances, Azmaiparashvili-Morozevich, FIDE World Cup, Shenyang 2000) 12...♖c6 13 0-0 0-0 14 a3 ♖d6 15 f4 (15 ♖g5 h6 16 ♖h4 ♖f4 17 ♖e2 e5 18 ♖xf4 exf4 19 f3 {Kramnik-Lautier, Amber blindfold, Monte Carlo 1998} 19...♗e5 20 ♖f2 ♗fd8 with a balanced game) 15...e5 16 f5 ♖d4 17 ♖g5 ♖c6 18 ♖d2 ♗fd8 19 ♖h1 h6! 20 ♖h4 ♗f8 with equal chances, F.Costa-Petruzzelli, ICCF corr. 2005.

9 bxc3 ♗a5 (D)

Black breaks the pin on his f6-knight with tempo. The alternative is 9...♖bd7 10 0-0 – 8...♖bd7 9 0-0 ♖xc3 10 bxc3.



10 ♖b5+

Alternatives:

a) 10 ♖xf6 (this was White's original choice here) 10...♗xc3+ 11 ♖f1 gxf6 (the tempting but flawed 11...♗xc4+? 12 ♖g1 leaves Black in trouble along the c-file) 12 ♖c1 ♗a5 13 h4 with sharp play. I shall not be examining this line in detail, but please note that this position has been reached more than 60 times in practice.

b) 10 ♖b5!? (Karpov's preference: White hopes to exploit the squares weakened as a result of the exchange of Black's dark-squared bishop) 10...♖xe4 11 ♖f4 (11 ♗d4 is another sharp branch) 11...0-0 12 0-0 ♖d7 (12...♖d7 13 ♖e1 {the hasty knight leap 13 ♖c7?? e5 14 ♖xa8 exf4 favoured Black in Karpov-Timman, FIDE World Ch match (game 14), Jakarta 1993, but White managed to win the game after a series of errors} 13...♖df6 14 a4 with sharp play, Karpov-Piket, match (game 2), Monte Carlo 1999) 13 a4 ♖c6 14 ♖e1 ♖a6 15 ♖e5 ♖ac5 16 ♗g4 g6 17 ♗f4 a6 with equal chances, Radjabov-Van Wely, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005.

10...♖d7

The bishop move has become more popular than the older 10...♖bd7 11 ♖xf6 (White reacts to the dual threats to his e4- and c3-pawns) 11...♗xc3+ 12 ♖f1 gxf6 13 h4 (a typical manoeuvre in this variation: White prepares to develop his king's rook) 13...a6 14 ♖h3 ♗a5 15 ♖e2 ♖c5 16 ♖b3 (the idea behind the knight retreat is to exchange Black's most active piece) 16...♖xb3 17 ♗xb3 b6 (Black prepares to develop his light-squared bishop to a useful diagonal) 18 ♖d1 ♖b7 with sharp play; a top-level example is Topalov-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

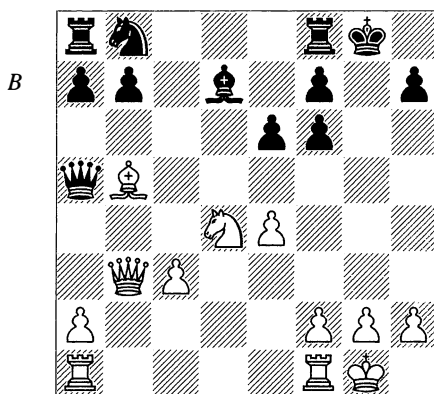
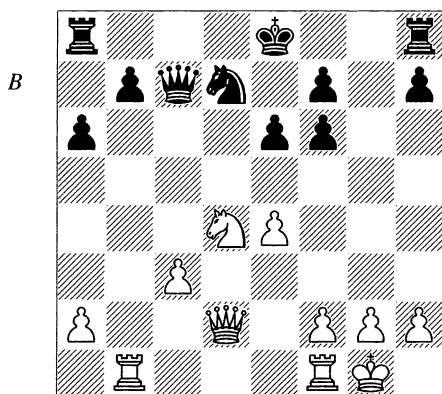
11 ♖xf6 gxf6

Not 11...♗xc3+?? 12 ♖f1 gxf6 13 ♖c1 ♗xd4 (13...♗a5 14 ♖c8+ and White wins) 14 ♗xd4 ♖xb5+ 15 ♖g1 with a decisive material advantage for White, Malakhov-Kosteniuk, Moscow blitz Ch 2005.

12 ♗b3

An important alternative is 12 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 13 0-0 a6 14 ♖b1 ♗c7 15 ♗d2!? (D).

The white queen takes aim at Black's vulnerable kingside; this interesting continuation has



generated renewed interest in this variation. Now:

a) 15...♖c8 16 ♜fd1 b5 17 ♜h6! gives White a strong attack as the black king is marooned in the centre, Korotylev-Smirnov, European Clubs Cup, Fügen 2006.

b) 15...0-0 16 ♜fd1 and then:

b1) 16...♟e5 17 ♜f4! (the stutter-step manoeuvre is more accurate than 17 ♜h6 ♟g6 intending ...♜f4, Azmaiparashvili-Harikrishna, Dos Hermanas 2005) 17...♜e7 (17...♟g7 18 ♜d3!) 18 ♜h6 is very strong for White.

b2) 16...♜ad8 17 ♜h6 ♟h8 18 ♜d3 with a slight advantage for White because of his safer king position, Akopian-Izoria, Moscow 2005.

c) 15...h5 16 f4 ♜c8 17 ♜f3 b5 18 ♜e1 with kingside pressure for White, while Black's king has no safe haven, Gelfand-Topalov, Amber blindfold, Monte Carlo 2005.

12...0-0

Black has a major alternative in 12...a6 13 ♟e2 ♟c6 14 0-0 ♜c7. I shall not be examining this position in detail, but please note that this position has been reached more than 60 times in practice, and experience has shown that White's chances are to be preferred because of his more secure king position.

13 0-0 (D)

13...♟xb5

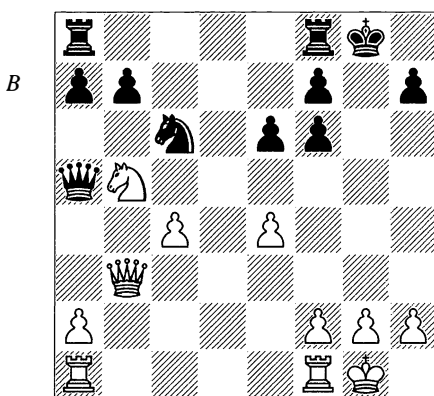
Black hastens to exchange bishops to draw the white knight away from the kingside. Alternatives:

a) 13...♜b6 14 ♜fd1 ♟c6 15 ♟xc6 ♟xc6 (15...♜xb3 16 axb3 ♟xc6 17 ♟xc6 bxc6 18 b4 gives White a favourable rook endgame because

of Black's four pawn-islands) 16 ♜c2 with a slight advantage for White as Black's kingside is vulnerable, Bocharov-Landa, Russian Ch, Krasnoirsark 2003.

b) 13...♟c6 14 ♟xc6 (14 a4 ♜fd8 15 ♜ad1 with the idea of ♜d3-g3+ was a 1988 suggestion by Mikhail Gurevich, to which 15...a6 looks like an adequate reply) 14...♟xc6 15 ♟xc6 bxc6 16 ♜ae1 ♜fd8 (16...♜ad8!?) 17 e5!? (White sacrifices a pawn to expose the black king further) 17...fxe5 18 ♜c4 ♜d5 (18...♟h8!? intending ...♜g8 is another reasonable idea) 19 ♜g4+ ♟h8 20 c4 (so far this is Khenkin-Rechlis, Tel Aviv 1992) 20...♜d4 21 ♜g5 ♜g8! (this is an improvement over 21...♜xc4?? 22 ♜f6+ ♟g8 23 ♜xe5 and White wins – Ftačnik) 22 ♜f6+ ♜g7 with equal chances.

14 ♟xb5 ♟c6 15 c4 (D)



This pawn advance simultaneously protects the knight while clearing a path to the kingside

for the white queen. The evaluation of this position centres around White's efforts to exploit the weakness of Black's doubled f-pawns to get to the black king. So far, Black has been able to maintain the balance with a series of precise moves.

15...♖ad8

Black seizes the open file; the downside of this line is that White has the option of forcing a draw by repetition. Alternatives:

a) 15...♗f8 (the idea here is to vacate the f8-square for the black king) 16 c5 (White is angling to play a timely ♘d6) 16...♗d7 (16...♘d4? loses a pawn: 17 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♖xb7) 17 ♖ac1 b6 (Babula-Schenk, Austrian Team Ch 2004) 18 ♘c7! ♘d4 (18...♗xc7 loses to 19 ♖g3+) 19 ♖g3+ ♖h8 20 ♖e3 ♗xc7 (20...♗ad8 21 ♘d5! exd5 22 ♖xd4 is crushing for White) 21 ♖xd4 ♖g7 22 e5! gives White a strong attack because of Black's exposed king.

b) 15...♗d2 (Black transfers his queen to the kingside for defensive purposes) 16 ♗ad1 ♖f4 17 ♘d6 ♗ad8 (17...b6!? with the idea of ...♘a5 was suggested by Beliavsky) 18 c5 b6 19 ♖a3 bxc5! (19...♖e5 20 ♖a4 ♘a5 21 ♗d3 gives White a strong attack, Beliavsky-I.Almasi, Hungarian Team Ch 2001/2) 20 ♖xc5 ♘e5 21 f3 gives White a clear plus according to Beliavsky in his *Informator* 84 notes, but I think Black can fight on after 21...♗d7 22 g3 ♖g5 23 ♖g2 ♗b8 with counterplay.

16 ♖g3+

White has also tried 16 c5 ♘d4 17 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♖g3+ (18 ♖xb7 ♖xc5 leads to equality) 18...♖h8 19 ♖f4 ♖xc5 20 ♖xf6+ ♖g8 21 ♗ac1 ♗c4 22 ♗cel ♗c8 23 ♗e3 ♗c1 24 ♗eel ♗xel 25 ♗xel ♖c1 26 ♗f1 ♗d2 1/2-1/2 Schandorff-P.H.Nielsen, Esbjerg 2003.

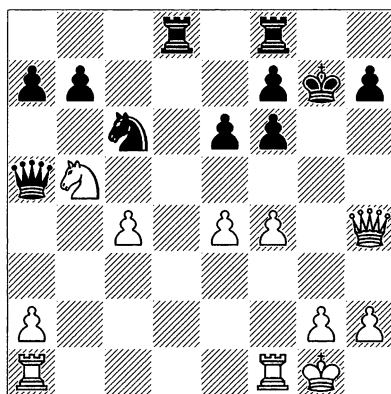
16...♖h8 17 ♖h4 ♖g7 18 ♖g3+

18 f4 – 18 ♖g3+ ♖h8 19 ♖h4 ♖g7 20 f4.

18...♖h8 19 ♖h4 ♖g7 20 f4 (D)

White has the option of 20 ♖g3+ ♖h8 21 ♖h4 with a draw by repetition.

B



20...♗d2!

Topalov inserts his queen into the heart of White's position. Less accurate is 20...♗d3?! 21 e5! ♗d8 22 ♖h5 with a dangerous attack; the most recent example is Mamedyarov-Bluvshstein, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

21 e5

Black is able to defuse White's attack after 21 ♗f3 ♗g8 (21...♗d3?? 22 ♖g3+ costs Black a rook) 22 ♗g3+ ♖f8 with counterplay.

21...fxe5 22 ♖g5+ ♖h8 23 ♖f6+ ♖g8 24 ♖g5+

Alternatives:

a) 24 ♗f3 – 24 ♖g5+ ♖h8 25 ♖f6+ ♖g8 26 ♗f3.

b) 24 ♗ael a6 25 ♖g5+ ♖h8 26 ♖f6+ ♖g8 27 ♗e4 ♖c2 28 ♖g5+ ♖h8 29 ♖f6+ ♖g8 30 ♘c3 ♗d2 31 ♖g5+ ♖h8 32 ♖f6+ ♖g8 33 ♖g5+ ♖h8 34 ♖f6+ 1/2-1/2 Mamedyarov-P.H.Nielsen, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

24...♖h8 25 ♖f6+ ♖g8 26 ♗f3

Vallejo Pons finally plays a new move, but it is not enough to disturb the equilibrium of the position. Another transposition is 26 ♗ael – 24 ♗ael.

26...♗d3 27 ♖g5+ ♖h8 28 ♖f6+

White has no alternative to repeating moves as 28 ♗f2 ♖e3 maintains the balance.

28...♖g8 29 ♖g5+ ♖h8 30 ♖f6+ ♖g8 1/2-1/2

5 Semi-Tarrasch Defence

Introduction

The Semi-Tarrasch Defence is characterized by the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 c5. Now White has the option of playing the Symmetrical Variation with 5 e3, or he can exchange pawns via 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 followed by 6 g3 or 6 e4 to grab the lion's share of the centre. The Semi-Tarrasch and Tarrasch Defences both feature an early ...c5 pawn advance, but the similarity ends after White captures Black's d5-pawn because in the Semi-Tarrasch Black recaptures with a knight to avoid an isolated d5-pawn. This variation is known as the 'Improved Tarrasch' in some countries. The line is often reached via alternative move-orders such as 1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 (White avoids the Nimzo-Indian Defence) 3...d5 4 ♜c3 c5.

The main line of the Semi-Tarrasch features an early exchange of two sets of minor pieces. Despite the simplification, White is often able to develop a powerful kingside attack because Black is missing two important defensive pieces: his king's knight and his dark-squared bishop. The Semi-Tarrasch was the battleground for one of the best-known examples of opening preparation in chess history: the game Polugaevsky-Tal, USSR Ch, Moscow 1969. The attacking themes employed in this classic struggle are still relevant to current opening theory and these ideas are featured in the notes to Game 15.

The Games

Game 13 (Aronian-Ftačnik) is a Semi-Tarrasch featuring the Symmetrical Variation 5 e3 ♜c6 6 a3. White plays an early dxc5 pawn exchange followed by a space-gaining extended fianchetto on the queenside. Black defends aggressively with an early ...d4 advance to unbalance the pawn-structure. The middlegame features a pin along the d-file, and at one point Aronian appears to be making progress, but Ftačnik plays a precise move to force an equal endgame.

In **Game 14** (P.H.Nielsen-Wedberg), White plays 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 g3, and Black replies with the sharp line 6...♜c6 7 ♗g2 ♜db4!? to apply immediate pressure to White's d4-pawn. Nielsen sacrifices the pawn to obtain a slight lead in development, and his pressure persists even after the exchange of queens. Wedberg returns the extra pawn in order to free his light-squared bishop, but then an inaccuracy allows White to win a pawn on the queenside. Nielsen displays fine technique by creating a passed pawn on the queenside and he is able to wrap up the point without allowing Wedberg to generate any counterplay.

Game 15 (Sharavdorj-Atalik) features the main line of the Semi-Tarrasch Defence, where White plays 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 e4 ♜xc3 7 bxc3. Black concedes the centre to White in order to exchange two sets of minor pieces and complete his development. Sharavdorj offers an early pawn sacrifice in order to generate a kingside attack. Atalik accepts the proffered material and defends with cold-blooded precision. Black emerges from the complications with two extra pawns at the cost of a weakened kingside pawn-structure, but he is able to defend accurately and finish off the game with some nice tactical ideas.

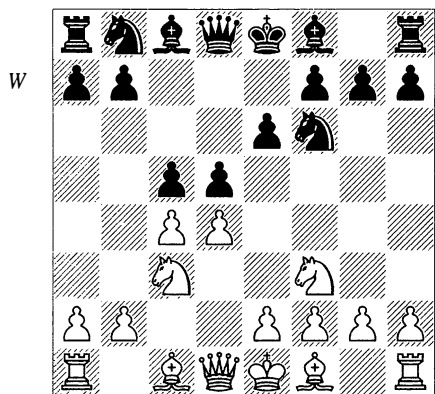
Game 13 [D40]

Levon Aronian – Lubomir Ftáčnik

*Bundesliga 2002/3***1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 c5 (D)**

This is the characteristic move of the Semi-Tarrasch.

4...♙b4 was discussed in Chapter 4, while 4...c6 is the Semi-Slav, not covered in this book. Another possible transposition is 4...dxc4 (this can lead to lines of the Queen's Gambit Accepted too) 5 e4 ♙b4 6 ♙g5, with a Vienna Variation (Game 12).

**5 e3**

White plays the Symmetrical Variation, a line which is also relevant to the Tarrasch Defence. The sharper 5 cxd5 is covered in Games 14 and 15.

5...♜c6

Black has the opportunity to steer the game toward another opening via 5...cxd4 6 exd4, and now:

a) 6...♙b4 7 cxd5 ♜xd5 8 ♖c2 (or 8 ♙d2) transposes to a line of the Caro-Kann Defence, Panov-Botvinnik Attack (ECO code B14) and so is beyond the scope of this book.

b) 6...dxc4 7 ♙xc4 a6 8 a4 ♜c6 9 0-0 ♙e7 transposes to a line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted (ECO code D27).

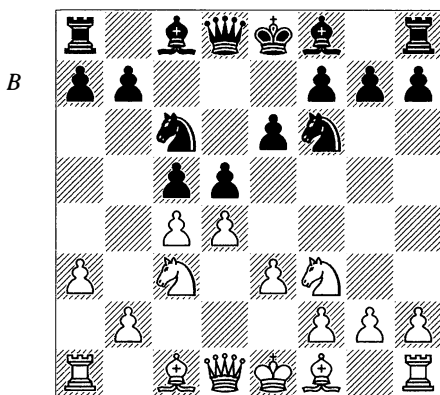
6 a3 (D)

This modest but cunning pawn move controls the b4-square in preparation for a possible

extended fianchetto of White's dark-squared bishop. Alternatives:

a) 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♙b5 transposes to a line of the Tarrasch Defence. This position is the subject of Game 3.

b) 6 ♙d3 (or 6 ♙e2) 6...dxc4 (Black gains a tempo by capturing the c4-pawn after White has already developed his light-squared bishop) 7 ♙xc4 cxd4 8 exd4 ♙e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 a3 b6 11 ♙g5 ♙b7 and we have transposed to Game 3, but with colours reversed.

**6...a6**

Black maintains the symmetry. Alternatives:

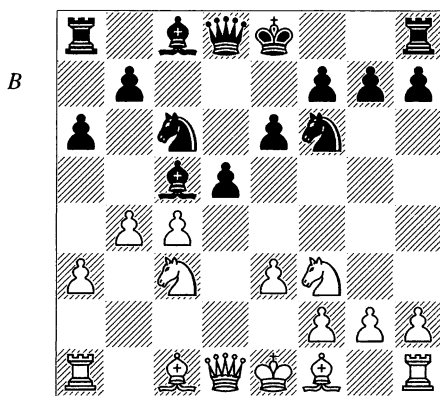
a) 6...cxd4 7 exd4 ♙e7 8 cxd5 ♜xd5 9 ♙d3 0-0 10 0-0 ♙f6 is a standard IQP position which can arise from various openings and move-orders; I shall not examine this line here.

b) 6...♙e7 7 dxc5 (now it is White's turn to gain a tempo!) 7...♙xc5 8 b4 ♙d6 9 ♙b2 0-0 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♜b5 ♙b8 12 ♙e2 with a slight advantage for White because of his firm control over the d4-square. This was first played in Botvinnik-Tal, World Ch match (game 12), Moscow 1960.

c) Following 6...♜e4!? 7 ♙d3 ♜xc3 8 bxc3 ♙e7, Black appears to have violated the general principles of opening development: he has exchanged a knight which has moved three times

for one that had only moved once. The justification is that Black has simplified the position by exchanging a set of minor pieces; also, the white pawn on a3 is not particularly useful in the new pawn-structure. After 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖c2 h6 11 ♖b2 ♘a5 12 ♘d2 (12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♘e5 c4 with a balanced game, Meleghegyi-Poulsen, ICCF corr. 1992) 12...dxc4 13 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 14 ♖xc4 b6 15 e4 ♖b7 the chances were equal in Petrosian-Fischer, Candidates match (game 8), Buenos Aires 1971, and Fischer went on to win an instructive major-piece endgame. Note the similarity between this position and the Exchange Grünfeld; the difference is that Black's bishop is on the slightly passive e7-square rather than g7, and White's bishop is on the slightly passive b2-square rather than e3.

7 dxc5 ♖xc5 8 b4 (D)



8...♖a7

Black retains control over the d4-square; in some lines this gives him the chance to eliminate his isolated d-pawn by playing ...d4. The alternative is 8...♖d6 9 ♖b2 0-0 (9...dxc4 10 ♖xc4 ♖c7 11 ♖c1 ♖d7 12 ♖d3 favours White as the black queen is misplaced on c7, Rizzitano-Novikov, Mashantucket 2005) 10 cxd5 (in comparison to note 'b' to Black's 6th move, White has been prevented from occupying the b5-square with his knight because Black has played the extra move ...a6) 10...exd5 11 ♖e2 ♖g4 12 0-0 ♖c8 13 ♖c1 ♖b8 with equality, Mikhailchishin-Stangl, Dortmund 1992.

9 ♖b2 0-0 10 ♖c2

Black has no problems after:

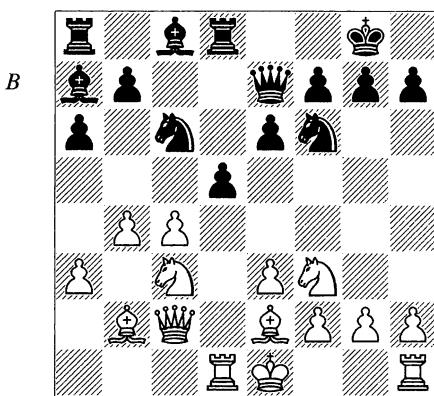
a) 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖e2 d4 (the pawn advance leads to sterile equality; Black could keep some tension in the position with 11...♖g4) 12 exd4 ♘xd4 13 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 14 0-0 1/2-1/2 Ljubovjević-Tal, Bugojno 1978.

b) 10 ♖e2 dxc4 11 ♖xc4 b5 12 ♖d3 ♖b7 13 0-0 ♖c8 with a balanced game, Shumiakina-Gaponenko, European Women's Ch, Istanbul 2003.

10...♖e7 11 ♖d1

White applies pressure to the d5-pawn. Another idea is 11 ♖d3 dxc4 (this is an example of the eternal 'battle for the tempo' in the QGD: Black waits for White to move his light-squared bishop before capturing the c4-pawn) 12 ♖xc4 b5 13 ♖d3 ♖b7 with easy development for Black, Adianto-Gunawan, Bali 2000.

11...♖d8 12 ♖e2 (D)



12...d4!?

Ftačnik selects the most dynamic move to unbalance the pawn-structure. Years earlier he had played 12...dxc4 13 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8. Then:

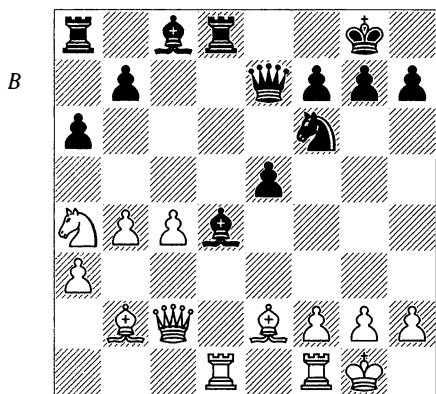
a) 14 ♖xc4 b5 15 ♖d3 ♖b7 (the symmetrical pawn-structure and balanced development make it difficult for either side to generate any serious threats) 16 0-0 ♖c8 17 ♖e2 ♖e8 (17...♖b8!?) 1/2-1/2 Pinter-Ruck, Belgian Team Ch 2005/6. A possible continuation is 18 a4!? bxa4 19 ♖a1 ♖e7 20 ♖xa4 ♘c6 with equal chances.

b) 14 ♘e4 ♘xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♖d7 16 ♖xc4 ♖c8 17 ♘e5 ♖e8 18 0-0 ♖b8 (Hübner-Ftačnik, Polanica Zdroj 1995) 19 f4 favours White because of his more active pieces.

13 exd4 ♖xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 15 0-0 e5

Black supports his well-centralized dark-squared bishop and prepares to develop his light-squared bishop.

16 ♖a4 (D)



16...♗g4

An alternative plan is to exchange White's nimble knight via 16...♗d7 17 ♗xd4 ♗xa4 18 ♖xa4 ♖xd4, and then:

a) 19 ♖c2 ♖ad8 20 ♖xd4 exd4, with a level game, was first played in Lehmann-Alburt, Kiev 1978.

b) 19 ♖xd4 exd4 20 ♗d3 ♖e5 is balanced, Trapl-Janousek, Czech Team Ch 1996/7.

17 ♗xg4

a) 17 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 18 ♗xg4 ♖xg4 – 17 ♗xg4 ♖xg4 18 ♗xd4 ♖xd4.

b) 17 c5!? ♖ac8 (17...♖e6!?) 18 ♖b6 ♖c6 19 ♖c4 with a slight advantage for White due to his well-placed knight, Mikhalchishin-Brglez, Ptuj 1995.

17...♖xg4 18 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 19 ♖b6 ♖ad8

Another idea is 19...♖e8 20 ♖d5 ♖h4 21 h3 ♖f6 22 ♖xd4! (this is more challenging than 22 ♖e3 g6 with equality, Portisch-Markus, European Ch, Warsaw 2005) 22...exd4 (22...♖xd4 23 ♖xf6+ gxf6 24 ♖d1 ♖f4 25 c5 with an advantage for White) 23 ♖f5 ♖xd5 24 ♖xd5 favours White because his well-centralized queen is a menace to Black's queenside pawns.

20 ♖d5 ♖d6

Black's queen must remain in the centre to control the e7-square because 20...♖h4? 21 h3 ♖h6 (after 21...♖f6 22 ♖e7+ ♖f8 23 ♖f5

White wins material) 22 ♖xd4 exd4 23 ♖e1 with the idea of ♖e4 is very strong for White, because Black's offside knight is unable to help out.

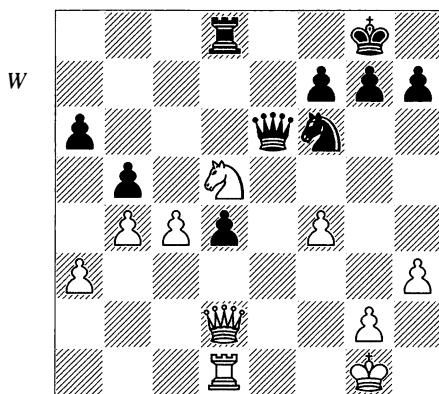
21 h3 ♖f6 22 ♖xd4 exd4 23 ♖d1 ♖e5

After 23...♖xd5? 24 ♖xd4 ♖c7 25 ♖d2 White exploits the pin along the d-file to win a pawn.

24 f4 ♖e6 25 ♖d2

Aronian continues to seek an advantage. The loose d4-pawn is a mirage: 25 ♖xd4 ♖e1+ 26 ♖h2 ♖g4+ 27 hxg4 ♖h4+ 28 ♖gl ♖e1+ 29 ♖h2 ♖h4+ with a draw by repetition.

25...b5 (D)



26 ♖xd4

Alternatives:

a) 26 ♖e1 ♖d6 27 ♖xd4 ♖f8! with equal chances.

b) 26 f5!? ♖e5 (26...♖xf5?? loses to 27 ♖e7+) 27 ♖e1 ♖g3 28 ♖xf6+ gxf6 29 ♖e4 h5 30 cxb5 axb5 31 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 32 ♖xd4 ♖xa3 with a drawn queen endgame.

26...♖h8!

Black avoids a devastating check and threatens ...bxc4.

27 f5 ♖e2 28 ♖c1

The pin along the d-file has become too hot for White's pieces so he prepares to simplify into a drawish ending.

28...bxc4 29 ♖e3 ♖d3 30 ♖xd3 cxd3 31 ♖xf6 gxf6 32 ♖f2 1/2-1/2

The likely continuation would be 32...d2 33 ♖d1 ♖d3 34 ♖e2 ♖xa3 35 ♖xd2 a5 with a drawn rook endgame.

Game 14 [D41]

Peter Heine Nielsen – Tom Wedberg

Malmö 2002

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙f6 4 ♙f3 c5 5 cxd5

The Symmetrical Variation 5 e3 was covered in Game 13.

5...♗xd5

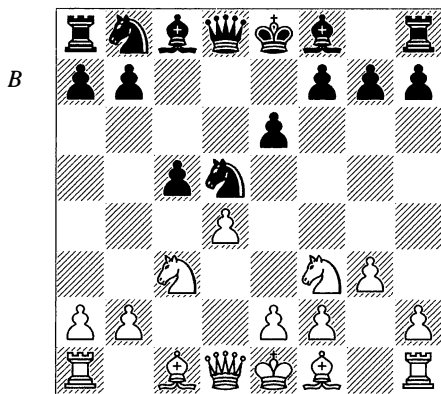
5...exd5 transposes to the note to Black's 5th move in Game 3.

6 g3 (D)

White prepares a kingside fianchetto. Alternatives:

a) 6 e3 ♗c6 7 ♕d3 cxd4 8 exd4 ♕e7 9 0-0 0-0 is a standard IQP position.

b) 6 e4 is covered in Game 15.



6...♗c6

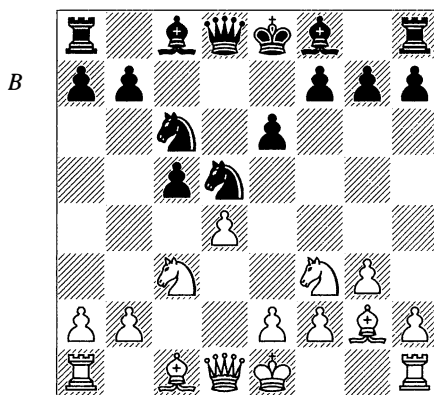
Black continues his development and applies pressure to White's d4-pawn. Alternatives:

a) 6...♗xc3 7 bxc3 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♕b4+ 9 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 10 ♖xd2 b6 (Black hurries to contest the long diagonal) 11 ♕g2 ♕b7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖fc1 ♗d7 14 a4 leads to a slight advantage for White, Benko-H.Olafsson, Lone Pine 1979.

b) 6...cxd4 7 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 8 ♖xd4 ♖b5!? 9 e4 ♖b4+ (Black appears to be losing time with his queen, but he has eased his queenside defence by provoking White into advancing his e-pawn and closing the h1-a8 diagonal) 10 ♖xb4 (10 ♕d2 ♗c6 11 ♖xb4 ♕xb4 12 ♕b5 ♕d7, with equal chances, was first played in

Petrosian-Furman, Kiev 1957) 10...♕xb4+ 11 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 12 ♖xd2 ♗c6 13 ♕b5 ♕d7 with an equal endgame, Atalik-Korchnoi, European Team Ch, Plovdiv 2003.

7 ♕g2 (D)



7...♗db4!?

The knight move applies immediate pressure to White's d4-pawn. Alternatives:

a) 7...cxd4 8 ♗xd4 ♗xc3 9 bxc3 ♗xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 11 cxd4 and now Black must choose between retaining or exchanging the dark-squared bishops:

a1) 11...♕d6 12 0-0 ♖b8 13 e4 0-0 (or 13...♕d7 14 ♕e3 0-0 15 ♖fc1 with a slight advantage for White – Kramnik) 14 e5! ♕e7 15 ♕e3 ♕d7 16 ♖fc1 ♖fc8 17 ♖xc8+ ♕xc8 18 ♖c1 and White is a little better, Kramnik-Lautier, Horgen 1995.

a2) 11...♕b4+ 12 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 13 ♖xd2 ♗e7 14 ♖hcl ♕d8 15 ♖c7+ ♕d7 16 ♖ac1 ♗d8 17 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 18 g4!? with just a slight advantage for White, Kramnik-Lautier, Belgrade 1995, and several subsequent games. White's plan is to advance his kingside pawns and open lines for his rook.

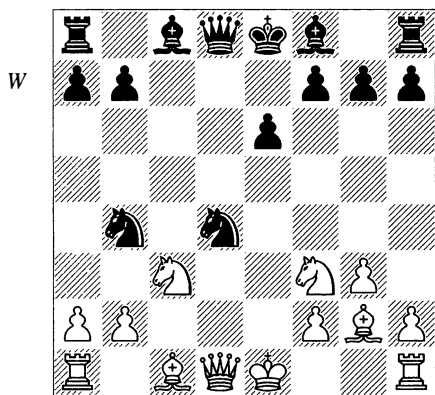
b) 7...♕e7 8 0-0 0-0 and here White's main choices are 9 ♗xd5 and 9 e4. I shall not be examining this position in detail, but please note

that more than a thousand games have been played in this line.

8 e3

White is compelled to sacrifice a pawn because Black can quickly mobilize his pieces after 8 dxc5 ♖xd1+ 9 ♜xd1 ♙xc5 10 a3 ♘d5 11 ♘xd5 exd5 12 b4 ♙b6 13 ♙b2 0-0 with a slight initiative for Black as the white king is misplaced in the centre of the board, Filippov-Krasenkow, Shanghai 2000.

8...cxd4 9 exd4 ♘xd4 (D)



10 0-0

The relatively unexplored alternative 10 ♘xd4!? is worthy of attention: 10...♙xd4 11 0-0 (not 11 ♙xd4?? ♘c2+ 12 ♘d1 ♘xd4 with a large advantage for Black) 11...♙xd1 12 ♙xd1 (so far this is Biriukov-Aseev, St Petersburg Ch 1998; White has good compensation for the pawn in the form of pressure against Black's undeveloped queenside) 12...♙e7 13 ♘b5 0-0 14 ♙f4 ♘c6 15 ♘c7 (another idea is 15 ♙d6!? ♙xd6 16 ♘xd6 ♙d8 17 ♙ac1 with reasonable compensation for the pawn) 15...♙b8 16 ♙xc6 bxc6 17 ♘d5 exd5 18 ♙xb8 ♙g4 19 ♙e1 (White must avoid 19 ♙xa7? ♙xd1 20 ♙xd1 ♙a8 21 ♙d4 ♙xa2, when Black has won a pawn) 19...♙b4 20 ♙xa7 ♙xe1 21 ♙xe1 with equal chances according to Tsesarsky.

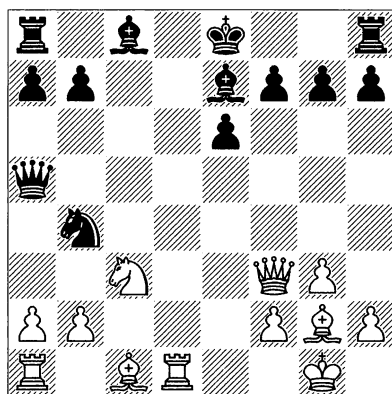
10...♘xf3+ 11 ♙xf3 ♙e7 12 ♙d1

Another idea is 12 ♙h5!? to stir up trouble on the kingside and prevent Black's queen from moving to a5.

12...♙a5 (D)

13 a3

W



White can also consider developing his bishop first by 13 ♙f4!? 0-0 14 ♙e2 ♘c6 15 a3 ♙f5! 16 ♙e4, and then:

a) 16...♙f6!? 17 ♙c2 (17 h4 h6 is fine for Black) 17...♘d4 18 ♙xh7+ ♜h8 and now 19 ♙d3! with sharp play. Note that White must avoid 19 ♙e4?? as given by Tsesarsky in view of 19...♘c6! with the idea of ...g6, stranding the wayward bishop.

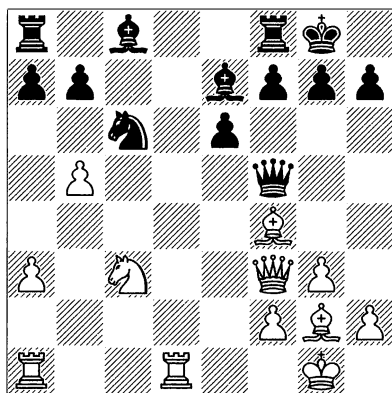
b) 16...♙h3 (the safest choice) 17 ♙g2 ♙f5 18 ♙e4 ♙h3 19 ♙g2 1/2-1/2 Stefansson-Macieja, Paget Parish 2001.

13...♘c6 14 ♙f4 0-0 15 b4

15 ♙e2 – 13 ♙f4!? 0-0 14 ♙e2 ♘c6 15 a3.

15...♙f5 16 b5 (D)

B



16...♘e5

The alternative is 16...♘a5 17 ♙c7 ♙xf3 18 ♙xf3, and then:

a) 18...♘b3 19 ♙ab1 ♘c5 20 a4 was the continuation of Kramnik-Topalov, Linares 1999.

Kramnik evaluated this position as favourable to White.

b) 18...♞c4!? (this was suggested by Kramnik in *Informator* 75) 19 a4 gives White reasonable compensation for the pawn as Black has yet to develop his queenside.

17 ♖e4

White can also consider retaining queens via 17 ♖e2 ♜g4 18 h3 ♜f6 19 ♙e5 with sharp play, Bochev-Mielke, ICCF corr. 2000.

17...♙xe4 18 ♜xe4

The e4-square can best be utilized by the white knight. The alternative recapture 18 ♙xe4 ♜c4 was fine for Black in V.Popov-Makarov, Sochi 2004.

18...♜c4 19 ♜d6 e5

Wedberg returns the extra pawn in order to free his light-squared bishop. After 19...♜xd6 20 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 21 ♖xd6 White has good compensation for the pawn.

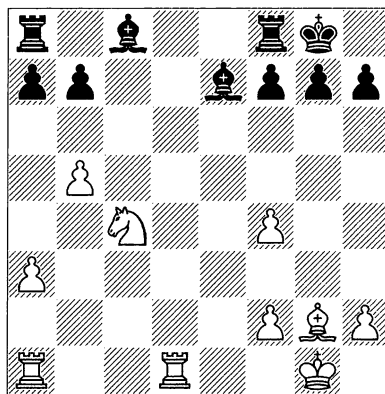
20 ♜xc4 exf4 21 gxf4 (D)

21...♙g4?

This natural developing move is the decisive mistake as now Black is unable to defend his queenside pawns. Black should patiently improve the position of his king by means of 21...g6 22 a4 ♖g7 23 a5 ♖b8 with chances for a successful defence.

22 ♖e1 ♙f6 23 ♜e5 ♙xe5 24 ♖xe5 ♖ad8

B



Black chooses active defence since 24...♖ab8 25 ♙e7 costs him one of the queenside pawns.

25 ♙xb7 ♖d4 26 a4

Nielsen's play is easy to understand: potential passed pawns must be pushed!

26...♖fd8 27 a5 ♙h3 28 b6 axb6

Black achieves nothing after 28...♖d1 + 29 ♖e1.

29 a6

The far-advanced pawn will cost Black an entire rook.

29...♙c8 30 ♖c1 ♙xb7 31 axb7 ♖d1+ 32 ♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 33 ♖g2 ♖d8 34 ♖e7 1-0

There is no defence: 34...♙f8 35 ♖c7 ♙e8 36 ♖c8 and the b-pawn queens.

Game 15 [D41]

Dashzeveg Sharavdorj – Suat Atalik

San Francisco 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 c5 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 e4 (D)

White establishes a broad pawn-centre. 6 g3 was covered in Game 14.

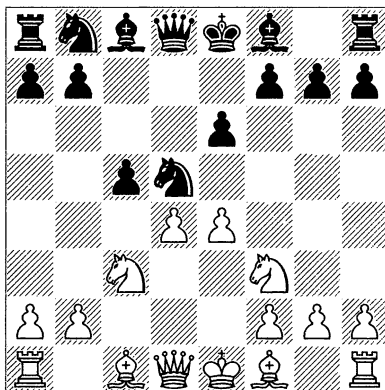
6...♜xc3

Black can also try 6...cxd4!?, and now:

a) 7 ♙b5+ ♙d7 8 exd5 dxc3 (8...♙xb5? loses to 9 dxe6 ♙b4 10 exf7+ ♙f8 11 ♜xd4) 9 dxe6 fxe6 10 ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 11 ♙b3!? ♜c6 12 0-0 with sharp play, Skembris-Zelčić, Cutro 2002.

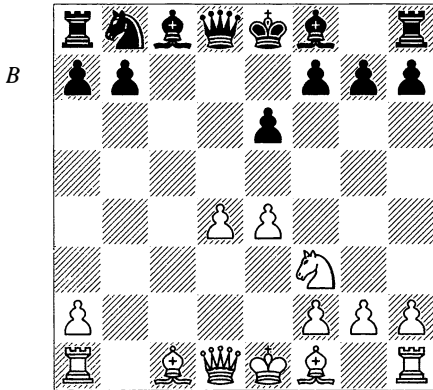
b) 7 ♙xd4 ♜xc3 8 ♙xc3 ♜c6 (play has transposed into a line of the English – ECO

B



code A34) 9 ♟b5 ♙d7 10 0-0 ♜b6 11 a4 ♞c5 12 ♞d3 ♞d6 13 ♞e2 with a pleasant development advantage for White.

7 $\text{bxc3 cxd4 8 cxd4 (D)}$



8... ♟b4+

Black exchanges another set of minor pieces. Alternatives:

a) 8... ♟e7?! (too passive) 9 $\text{♟c4 0-0 10 0-0 ♞c6}$ 11 $\text{♟b2 b6 12 ♞c1 ♞a5 13 ♟d3 ♟b7 14 ♞e2}$ with a clear plus for White because of his total control of the centre, Grishchuk-Paap, Mainz 2005.

b) 8... $\text{♞c6 9 ♟c4 b5!?$ and now:

b1) 10 $\text{♟d3 ♟b4+ 11 ♟d2 (11 ♟f1! 0-0 12 e5 ♞d5 13 ♞b1}$ led to unclear complications in Shabalov-D.Gurevich, USA Ch, San Diego 2004) 11... $\text{♟xd2+ 12 ♞xd2 a6 13 a4 0-0}$ with equal chances, Spassky-Fischer, World Ch match (game 9), Reykjavik 1972; this was the stem game for 9... $\text{b5!?$.

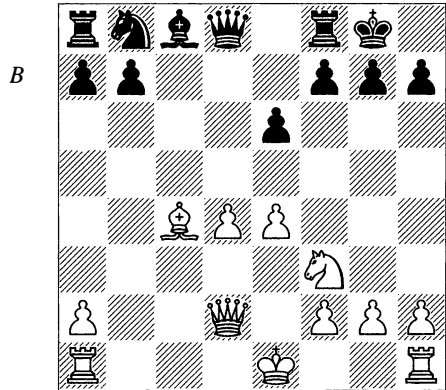
b2) 10 $\text{♟e2 ♟b4+ 11 ♟d2 ♞a5 12 d5!}$ (the most forcing continuation, by which White establishes a passed d-pawn) 12... $\text{exd5 13 exd5 ♞e7 14 0-0! ♟xd2}$ (not 14... $\text{♞xd5?? 15 ♟xb4 ♞xb4 16 ♞d6 ♟e6 17 ♟fb1}$, when White wins) 15 $\text{♞xd2 0-0 16 ♞b3 ♞d8 17 ♟f3 ♞f5 18 ♞c1 ♞d6 19 ♞d4}$ with an advantage for White because of his powerful passed d-pawn, Yusupov-Ribli, Montpellier Candidates 1985.

9 ♟d2 ♟xd2+

The inferior 9... $\text{♞a5? 10 ♞b1! ♟xd2+ 11 ♞xd2 ♞xd2+ 12 ♞xd2 0-0 13 ♟b5!}$ (the idea is to provoke a queenside weakness) 13... $\text{a6 14 ♟d3 ♞d8 15 ♞hc1}$, with a clear plus for White,

was first played in Rubinstein-Schlechter, San Sebastian 1912; Black is hopelessly bottled up on the queenside.

10 $\text{♞xd2 0-0 11 ♟c4 (D)}$



White develops his light-squared bishop to an aggressive square in support of a future d5 pawn-break.

11... ♞c6

This natural developing move is Black's most popular choice here. Alternatives:

a) 11... $\text{b6 12 0-0 ♞c6 - 11... ♞c6 12 0-0 b6}$.

b) 11... $\text{♞d7 12 0-0 b6 13 ♞ad1 ♟b7 14 ♞fe1}$ (White develops his rooks to the central files to support the advance of his centre pawns) 14... $\text{♞c8 15 ♟b3 ♞e8 16 ♞f4 ♞f6 17 ♞d6 ♞ed8 18 ♞a3}$ with a slight advantage for White thanks to his strong central pawn duo and queenside pressure, Van Wely-Cu.Hansen, Ter Apel 1993.

12 0-0 b6

Black prepares to fianchetto his light-squared bishop to apply pressure on White's central pawns.

13 ♞ad1 (D)

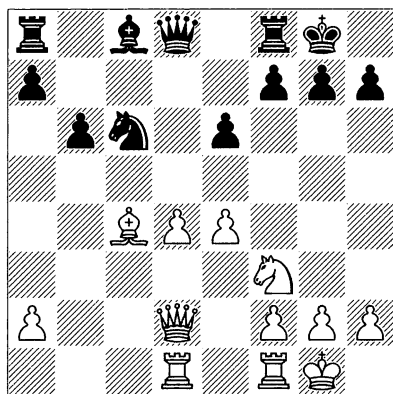
13... ♞a5

The alternative is 13... ♟b7 14 ♞fe1 , and then:

a) 14... $\text{♞a5 15 ♟d3 - 13... ♞a5 14 ♟d3 ♟b7 15 ♞fe1!}$.

b) 14... $\text{♞c8?! 15 d5 exd5 16 ♟xd5 ♞c7 (16... ♞a5 17 ♞f4 ♞c7 18 ♞f5 ♟xd5 19 exd5 and White's powerful passed d-pawn quickly decided matters in Spassky-Petrosian, World Ch match (game 5), Moscow 1969) 17 ♞g5 (17 e5! ♞e7 18 ♟xb7 ♞xb7 {Nogueiras-Tal,$

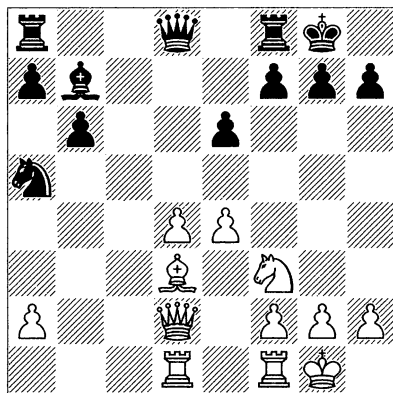
B



Brussels 1988} 19 ♖g5 with a strong attack; it is unclear why Tal was willing to play into this line again, but I am jumping ahead of the story...) 17...h6 18 ♖g4 ♗fd8 19 h3 ♖b4 20 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 21 ♖d4 gives White an irresistible kingside attack, Heasman-Hoskyn, New Zealand corr. Ch 1997.

14 ♗d3 ♗b7 (D)

W



15 d5?!

The pawn advance has been played in a dozen high-level games. However, it appears to be premature by one move. White has two attractive alternatives:

a) 15 ♖f4 (White brings another attacking piece to the kingside) 15...♗f6 16 ♖g3 and now:

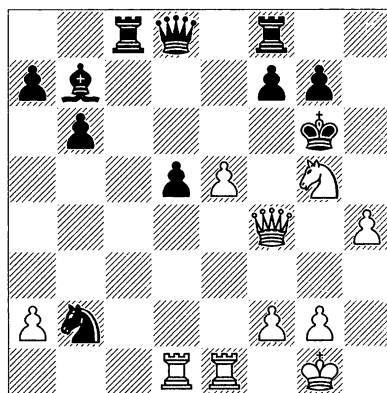
a1) 16...♗e7 17 d5! ♗ad8 18 e5! ♗xd5 (not 18...♗xd5 losing to 19 ♗xh7+) 19 ♗xh7+ (the bishop sacrifice on h7 is a recurring theme in this line) 19...♗xh7 20 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 21 ♖g5+ ♗g8 (Black is quickly mated after 21...♗g6 22

♖xe6+ or 21...♗h6 22 ♖h4+) 22 ♖h4 ♖xg5 (Black must sacrifice his queen to avert check-mate) 23 ♖xg5 ♖c6 24 f4 ♖d4 (Khalifman-Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1993) 25 ♗f2 ♗c5 26 h3 with a clear plus for White as the queen is boss.

a2) 16...♖g6 17 ♖h3 ♖h6 18 ♖xh6 gxf6 (M.Gurevich-Winants, Antwerp 1993) 19 ♗fe1 with a structural advantage for White.

b) 15 ♗fe1! (White completes his development before breaking open the centre) 15...♗c8? (15...♗e7?! 16 d5 ♗ad8 17 ♖d4 g6 18 ♖h6 with a dangerous kingside attack, Lautier-Kasimdzhanov, Wijk aan Zee 2002; 15...h6!? 16 ♖f4 ♖f6 17 ♖g3 ♗e7 with sharp play, Gyimesi-Pinter, Austrian Team Ch 2004/5) 16 d5! (now the timing of this advance is perfect as White has completed his development) 16...exd5 17 e5 (this is the standard pawn sacrifice; White vigorously pursues a kingside attack) 17...♖c4 18 ♖f4 ♖b2 19 ♗xh7+! ♗xh7 20 ♖g5+ ♗g6 21 h4!! (D).

B



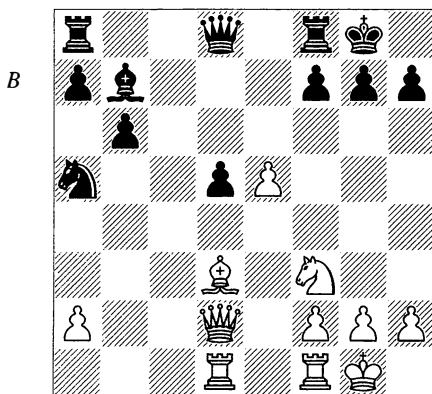
Black has two defensive tries:

b1) 21...♗e7 was first played in Cranbourne-Ninov, corr. 1996. Now White's most precise continuation is 22 ♗e3 (this is one of the benefits of the preparatory move 15 ♗fe1!: White is able to enhance his attack with a rook-lift on the kingside) 22...♗c4 23 h5+ ♗h6 24 ♖e4+ ♗h7 25 ♖f5+ ♗h6 26 ♗g3 ♗xe4 27 ♗g6+ ♗h7 28 ♗e6+ ♗g8 29 ♗xe7 ♗c8 30 ♖f3 ♗g4 31 ♖g3 ♗xd1 32 f3 with a decisive advantage for White according to Cranbourne in *Informator* 71.

b2) 21...♗c4 22 h5+ ♗h6 (22...♗xh5? 23 g4+ ♗g6 {23...♗h6 24 ♖h2+ 1-0 Avrukh-Donk,

Antwerp 1998} 24 ♖f5+ ♕h6 25 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 26 ♖h5#) 23 ♜xf7++ ♕h7 24 ♖f5+ ♕g8 25 e6!. In his classic book *Grandmaster Preparation*, Lev Polugaevsky tells the story of how he had prepared this entire line several months earlier during a joint analysis session with Boris Spassky. Spassky had the opportunity to play the line in his world championship match versus Tigran Petrosian, but Petrosian varied earlier – see note ‘b’ to Black’s 13th move. Several months later, Polugaevsky had this position on the board in his room on the morning prior to his game versus Mikhail Tal. The conclusion was 25...♖f6 (White wins after both 25...♜xd1 26 e7 and 25...♖e7 26 h6! ♜h4 27 ♜d4) 26 ♖xf6 gxf6 27 ♜d2 ♖c6 28 ♜xb2 ♜e8?! (more resistance was offered by 28...♙c8 29 ♜h6+ ♕h7 30 ♜f5 ♜xe6 31 ♜c1 ♕g8 32 f3 with a slight advantage for White because of his superior minor piece) 29 ♜h6+ ♕h7 30 ♜f5 ♜xe6 31 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 32 ♖c2 ♖c6 33 ♜e2 ♙c8 34 ♜e7+ ♕h8 (34...♕g8 35 ♜h4 ♙a6 36 ♜xa7 ♙d3 37 ♕h2 and White wins) 35 ♜h4 f5 36 ♜g6+ ♕g8 37 ♜xa7 1-0 Polugaevsky-Tal, USSR Ch, Moscow 1969. A classic game featuring one of the finest examples of careful opening preparation in chess history.

15...exd5 16 e5 (D)



16...♜c4!

The knight leap is Black’s most precise response. Alternatives:

a) 16...d4? is too good to be true after 17 ♜xd4 ♖d5 18 ♖g5! f6 (18...♜ae8 19 ♜fe1 increases the kingside pressure) 19 ♖g4 ♖xe5

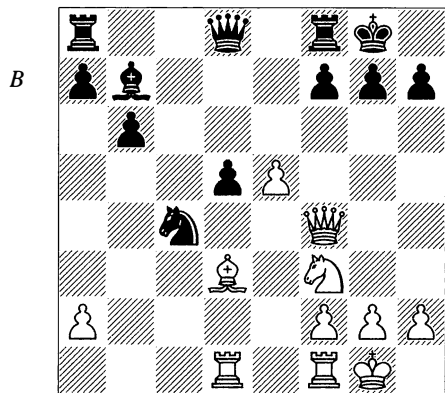
(19...fxe5 20 ♜f5 wins for White) 20 ♜f5 ♖c7 (20...g6 21 ♜fe1 is also a win for White) 21 ♜c1 1-0 Rogozenko-Kveinyas, Koszalin 1998. Black loses a piece after 21...♜c6 22 ♙e4 with a decisive pin along the c-file.

b) 16...♜c8?! 17 ♜fe1 – 15 ♜fe1! ♜c8 16 d5! exd5 17 e5. The addition of the moves ...♜c8 and ♜fe1 favours White as it gives him the option of playing ♜e3 in several lines.

c) 16...♙c8!? (the bishop returns home to defend the kingside) 17 ♖f4 ♖e7 18 ♜d4 ♙e6 (Martins Mesquita-Pena Gomez, corr. 2004) 19 ♜fe1 with good compensation for the pawn.

d) 16...♖e7 17 ♜fe1 ♜c4 18 ♖e2 gives White compensation for the pawn according to Atalik in his *Informator 93* notes.

17 ♖f4 (D)



17...♖e7!?

Black should play the bold knight leap 17...♜b2! 18 ♙xh7+ (White is compelled to sacrifice the bishop because 18 ♜d2? ♜xd3 19 ♜xd3 ♙a6 gives Black a decisive material advantage) 18...♕xh7 19 ♜g5+ ♕g6 20 h4 ♖e7! 21 ♜de1 ♜c4!, and now:

a) 22 g4 (threatening ♖f5+) 22...♕h6! 23 ♜e4+ g5! 24 hxg5+ ♕g6 25 ♖f5+ ♕g7 26 ♜f6 ♜h8 and Black has repulsed the attack.

b) 22 h5+ ♕h6 23 ♜e6+ (23 ♜xf7+ ♕h7 24 e6 ♖f6 is winning for Black) 23...♕h7 24 ♖f5+ ♕g8 25 ♜g5 (25 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 also favours Black) 25...g6 26 hxg6 and then:

b1) 26...f6 27 exf6! (Atalik gives 27 g7 fxg5 leading to a win for Black) 27...♖xf6 28 ♖d7 ♖xg6 29 ♖xb7 ♖xg5 30 f4 ♜ab8! (30...♖f5?

loses to 31 ♖f3) 31 ♖xb8 ♗g7 (White's queen is unable to escape the net) 32 ♜e8 ♖d4+ 33 ♜f2 (33 ♖h2 ♗h8+ 34 ♖g3 ♗g7+ also leads to a draw) 33...♖d1+ 34 ♜f1 (34 ♖h2?? fails to 34...♗h5+, winning the e8-rook) 34...♖d4+ with a draw by perpetual check.

b2) 26...♙c8! 27 gxf7+ ♜xf7 28 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 29 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 with a clear plus for Black as the two minor pieces are stronger than the rook.

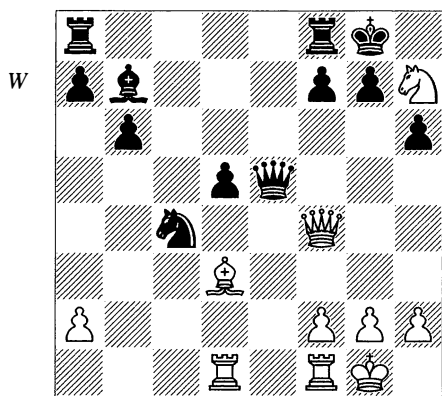
18 ♖g5?

Sharavdorj goes for the kill, but there is a tactical flaw. Alternatives:

a) 18 ♜fe1? ♖b2! 19 ♖d2 (White runs out of pieces after 19 ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 20 ♖g5+ ♖g6 21 ♜e3 f6, with a decisive material advantage for Black) 19...♖xd3 20 ♜xd3 ♜ac8 21 ♖d4 ♜c4 22 ♜g3 ♙c8! with a clear plus for Black, Doettling-Yusupov, French Team Ch 2004.

b) 18 ♖de1 ♖b2! 19 ♙e2 (White does not have enough firepower to justify 19 ♙xh7+? ♖xh7 20 ♖g5+ ♖g6 21 ♜e3 {Kalinichev-Kantorik, Bad Wiessee 1999}) 21...f6! 22 exf6 ♗xf6 23 ♗h4 ♗xg5 24 ♜g3 ♗xg3 25 ♗xg3+ ♖h7 with a material advantage for Black) 19...h6 20 ♖d4 ♖c4 21 ♙xc4 dxc4 22 ♖f5 ♗g5 23 ♗xg5 hxg5 24 f4 and the chances are roughly equal.

18...h6! 19 ♖h7 ♗xe5! (D)



Atalik exploits the unfortunate line-up of white pieces along the f1-a6 diagonal to obtain a material advantage.

20 ♗f3

White's overactive knight is stranded after this move. However, no relief is offered by 20

♗xe5 ♖xe5 21 ♖xf8 ♖xd3 22 ♜xd3 ♙a6 23 ♜xd5 ♙xf1 24 ♖xf1 ♖xf8 25 ♜d7 b5 26 ♜b7 a6 with good winning chances for Black. Atalik gives additional detail on this rook endgame in his *Informator 93* notes.

20...♜fe8! 21 ♙xc4 dxc4 22 ♖xb7 ♗e4

Another promising alternative is 22...♗e6 23 ♜d7 ♜ac8 and Black's advanced c-pawn will decide the game.

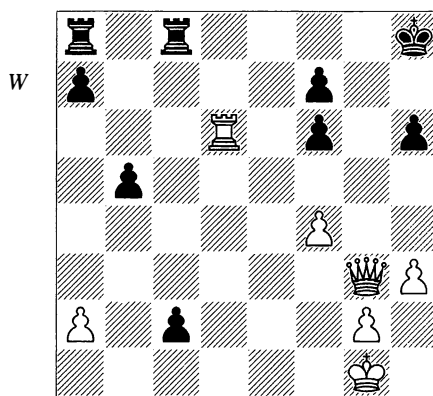
23 ♖f6+

The knight takes some satisfaction in weakening Black's pawn-structure before its demise.

23...gxf6 24 ♗c7 b5 25 ♜d7 ♗e6 26 h3 ♜ec8 27 ♗g3+ ♖h8 28 ♜fd1 c3 29 ♜d6 ♗e5 30 f4

No relief is offered by 30 ♗h4 ♗g5 31 ♗xg5 fxg5 32 ♜d1 ♖g7, with a decisive material advantage for Black.

30...♗xd6! 31 ♜xd6 c2 (D)



32 ♜xf6?

Relatively best is 32 ♗h4 c1♖+ 33 ♖h2 ♖g8 34 ♗xf6 (34 ♜xf6 ♜c6 wins for Black) 34...♗e3! (34...♗c5? 35 ♜d3 gives White too much of an attack) 35 ♗xh6 ♜c5! (Black controls the g5-square; not 35...♜c4? 36 ♗g5+ ♖f8 37 ♗h6+ ♖e8 38 ♗h8+ ♖e7 39 ♗f6+ with a draw by perpetual check) 36 ♗h4 ♜ac8 37 ♜h6 ♖d4 and Black wins – Atalik.

32...c1♖+ 33 ♖h2 ♜c6 34 ♜xf7 ♗c3 35 ♗h4 ♜g8 36 ♜c7

Losing another rook, but the end result is the same after 36 ♗f2 ♜cg6 37 g4 ♜d6: Black wins.

36...♜xc7 0-1

After 37 ♗xh6+ ♜h7 there is no perpetual check.

6 Cambridge Springs and Lasker Defences

Introduction

The Cambridge Springs is characterized by the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6 4 ♕g5 ♗bd7 5 ♗f3 c6 6 e3 ♖a5. Black responds to the pin on his king's knight by initiating a counterattack on the queenside.

The Anti-Tartakower (and Anti-Lasker) Variation is reached via 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6 4 ♕g5 ♕e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♗f3 h6 7 ♕xf6. White exchanges his dark-squared bishop for Black's king's knight. White can pursue a minority attack on the queenside, or play in the centre depending upon Black's response.

The Lasker Defence is defined by the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6 4 ♕g5 ♕e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♗f3 h6 7 ♕h4 ♗e4. Black seeks to free his position by exchanging two sets of minor pieces. This line is not popular at the moment because it is often difficult for Black to yearn for more than a draw, but White must be well-prepared to meet this variation if he wishes to fight for an opening advantage.

The Games

Game 16 (Postny-Acs) is a Cambridge Springs featuring 7 ♗d2 ♕b4 8 ♖c2. An IQP position soon arises, but White has a knight posted on b3 instead of the traditional f3-square. Acs strikes out with an early ...a5 pawn advance and he quickly takes over the initiative on the queenside. Postny misses an opportunity to ruin Black's kingside pawn-structure and Black soon wins a pawn. Postny almost manages to salvage a pawn-down rook endgame, but Acs is able to bring home the full point after a stretch of inaccurate play.

In **Game 17** (Halkias-Rychagov), White plays the Anti-Tartakower (and Anti-Lasker) Variation 6...h6 7 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 8 ♖c1. The players follow a topical line and soon both sides have an isolated pawn. Halkias introduces a new idea on move 19, but Rychagov defends well and the game winds down into an even endgame.

Game 18 (Ivanchuk-Onishchuk) features the Lasker Defence, 6...h6 7 ♕h4 ♗e4. White enters one of the topical main lines beginning with 8 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 9 ♖c1, and Black counters several moves later by introducing an opening novelty. Onishchuk obtains active piece-play at the cost of a weakened pawn-structure, and he later sacrifices a pawn for piece activity. Ivanchuk returns the pawn to launch a back-rank attack. The game takes several interesting twists and turns as the black king is uprooted from the kingside and driven across the board. Black commits the final mistake and his king becomes ensnared in a mating-net.

Game 16 [D52]

Evgeny Postny – Peter Acs

World Junior Ch, Athens 2001

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6 4 ♕g5

White immediately pins the f6-knight. 4 ♗f3 was covered in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

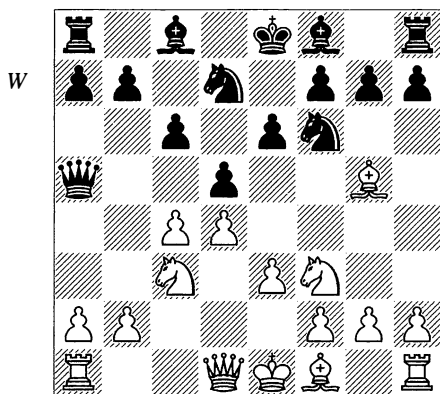
4...♗bd7

Black can also play the sharp 4...c5?! (the Dutch-Peruvian Gambit) 5 cxd5 cxd4 (the older 5...♖b6?! 6 ♕xf6 ♖xb2 7 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 8 ♖xc1 gxf6 9 ♗f3 favours White because of his lead in development) 6 ♖xd4 ♕e7 7 e4 ♗c6 8 ♖d2 exd5 9 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 10 exd5 ♖e7+ 11 ♗ge2 ♗e5 12 d6 ♖d8 13 ♗g3 and White has consolidated his extra pawn, Korchnoi-Hector, Val Maubúée 1990.

5 ♗f3

White can transpose into the Exchange Variation with 5 cxd5 exd5 6 e3 (White must avoid the well-known blunder 6 ♗xd5?? ♗xd5 7 ♕xd8 ♕b4+ 8 ♖d2 ♗xd8 and Black has won a piece) 6...c6 7 ♕d3 ♕e7 8 ♖c2 0-0. This position was covered in Chapter 3, Games 6 and 7.

5...c6 6 e3 ♖a5 (D)



This is the signature move of the Cambridge Springs: Black breaks the pin on his f6-knight and he intends to increase the pressure on White's c3-knight with moves such as ...♗e4 and ...♕b4. The justification for the early queen development is that Black hopes to exploit the absence of White's dark-squared bishop from

the queenside. Another important motif to note is the position of Black's queen and White's g5-bishop on the same rank – White must be wary of an attack on the bishop involving a timely ...dxc4 capture by Black.

The Cambridge Springs can also arise via a Semi-Slav move-order: 1 d4 d5 (or 1...♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 d5 4 ♗c3 c6) 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 c6 (the Triangle or Wedge Variation) 4 ♗f3 (Black must be prepared for other moves including 4 e4, known as the Marshall Gambit) 4...♗f6 (this is the basic position of the Semi-Slav) 5 ♕g5 (Black must be prepared for other moves, most notably 5 e3) 5...♗bd7 (White must be ready to face the main Semi-Slav options, Botvinnik's 5...dxc4 and 5...h6, the Moscow Variation) 6 e3 ♖a5. As always, it is important to have your opening repertoire worked out in advance so that you are prepared to handle alternative move-orders and can avoid being tricked into unfamiliar territory.

7 ♗d2

White breaks the pin on the c3-knight and reduces the impact of ...♗e4. The knight retreat is the most popular choice here, but it is somewhat of a concession because White makes a second move with a well-placed piece and reduces his control over the e5-square. Alternatives:

a) 7 ♕d3? (this careless move is often played at lower club level, so be prepared!) 7...dxc4 8 ♕xf6 and then:

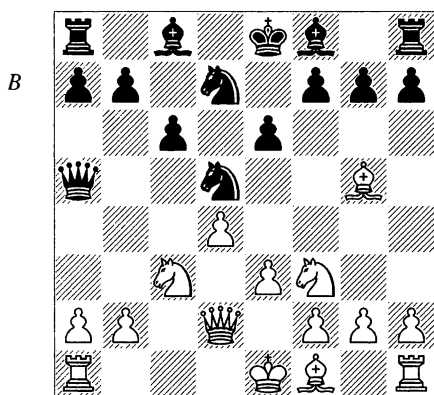
a1) 8...♖b4?! 9 ♖b1! (I prefer the rook move to 9 ♕xg7? ♕xg7 10 ♕c2 ♖xb2, when White has insufficient compensation for the pawn according to Panczyk and Ilczuk) 9...cxd3 10 ♕h4 ♖c4 11 0-0 b6 12 ♗d2 ♖a6 13 b4 with reasonable compensation for the pawn.

a2) 8...cxd3! 9 ♕h4 ♕b4 10 ♖xd3 b6! 11 a3 ♕a6 12 ♖d2 0-0! (I think this is more challenging than 12...♕xc3 13 ♖xc3 with equal chances according to Panczyk and Ilczuk) 13 0-0-0 ♕xc3 14 ♖xc3 ♖h5 15 ♖he1 c5 with a

pleasant initiative for Black because of White's vulnerable king position.

b) 7 xf6 xf6 8 d2 b4 (Black has no problems in this line as he can quickly develop his pieces and free his position) 9 c2 0-0 10 d3 e8 11 0-0 e5 12 cxd5 exd4 ! (Black avoids an isolated d-pawn) 13 b3 d8 14 xd4 xc3 15 xc3 xd5 16 c2 h4 with equal chances, Cmilyte-Heinlein, Hamburg 2005.

c) 7 cxd5 (White clarifies the centre before completing his development; this line often involves a pawn sacrifice) 7... xd5 8 d2 (D).



8... d7b6 (8... b4 9 c1 h6 10 h4 0-0 11 a3 xc3 12 bxc3 xa3 13 e4 d7 14 d3 g6 15 g3 e5 16 0-0 e8 17 f1 {Kramnik-Bruzon, Turin Olympiad 2006}) 17... e7 18 h4 !? gives White compensation) 9 d3 xc3 10 bxc3 d5 (10... a4 !?) 11 0-0 xc3 12 e2 d6 13 d2 a5 14 c4 c7 15 xd6+ xd6 16 h4 with good compensation for the pawn, Gligorić-Shengelia, Panormo Zonal 1998.

7... b4

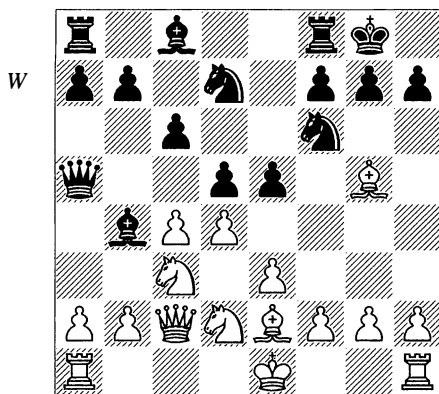
A solid and popular alternative is 7... dxc4 8 xf6 xf6 9 xc4 c7 10 e2 e7 11 0-0 12 c1 d8 13 c2 d7 with roughly equal chances, A. Smirnov-Bocharov, St Petersburg 2004, and several other high-level games. Black's position is slightly cramped, but he has the bishop-pair and no weaknesses.

8 c2 0-0 9 e2

White must avoid the ancient trap 9 d3 ?? (my database contains more than 60 games with this move!) 9... dxc4 10 xc4 (White also remains a piece down after 10 xf6 cxd3 11

xd3 xf6) 10... xg5 and Black has won a piece, De Visser-J. Young, Cable match 1904 and many subsequent games.

9... e5 (D)



Black opens a diagonal for his light-squared bishop; note that this freeing move is possible because of the location of the white knight on the d2-square.

10 0-0

Alternatives:

a) 10 xf6 xf6 11 dxe5 d4 12 cxd5 xc3 13 bxc3 xc3 14 c1 b4 ! (14... xe5 15 dxc6 d8 16 d3 bxc6 17 0-0 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ Pavlov-Kirchanov, Novosibirsk 2001) 15 d3 (Bock-Philipowski, Dortmund 2001) 15... d8 ! with strong counterplay for Black as the white king is stranded in the centre.

b) 10 dxe5 ! (this rarely-played move was recommended by Panczyk and Ilczuk) 10... d4 11 cxe4 ! dxe4 12 d1 xe5 13 0-0 and then:

b1) 13... f3+ 14 xf3 exf3 15 xf3 g4 16 f4 h5 17 e2 leaves Black with insufficient compensation for the pawn.

b2) 13... xd2 14 xd2 xd2 15 xd2 e6 16 b3 (Otterson-Stadler, e-mail 1999), and here:

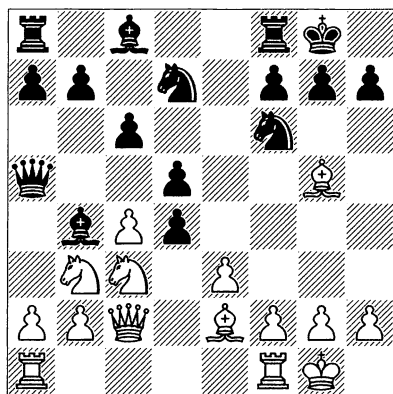
b21) 16... f6 17 f4 ad8 18 fd1 with a favourable endgame for White – Panczyk and Ilczuk.

b22) 16... g6 17 fd1 f6 18 f4 xf4 19 exf4 with a slight advantage for White thanks to his control of the d-file.

10... exd4 11 b3 (D)

This is one of the main ideas behind the 7 d2 line. White drives the black queen away

B



from the a5-square and relieves the pressure on his c3-knight.

11...♙b6

White has spent three moves to manoeuvre his knight away from the kingside to a passive post on b3, whereas Black has spent two tempi to develop his queen to an active square; even if Black has to make another move with his queen, he should be satisfied with this exchange of tempi. Acs has also played 11...♙c7 12 ♖xd4 dxc4 13 ♙xc4 ♙xc3 14 bxc3 ♙e5 15 ♖f3 ♙e7 (15...♙c5 16 ♙d3 ♙e8 17 ♙d4 ♖e4 with a balanced game, Arencibia-Acs, Varadero 2000) 16 ♙fe1 h6 17 ♙h4 ♙c5 with sharp play, Postny-Acs, Israeli Open Ch, Tel Aviv 2001. This game was played several months prior to our featured game.

12 exd4 dxc4

Black saddles White with an isolated d-pawn and ensures that his b4-bishop has a retreat-path.

13 ♙xc4 a5!?

Black grabs some space on the queenside.

14 ♙ad1

An alternative strategy is to prevent the further advance of Black's a-pawn with 14 a4 ♙c7 15 ♙ae1 h6 (15...b6 16 ♙e3 1/2-1/2 Marzolo-Perez Candelario, Portuguese Team Ch, Evora 2006; of course the game is just beginning!) 16 ♙h4 ♙d6 with sharp play, Carlsen-Kasparov, Reykjavik rapid 2004.

14...a4 15 ♖c1

Another idea is 15 ♖c5 ♙xc5 16 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 17 dxc5 ♙xc5 18 ♖xa4 ♙h5 with equal chances according to Acs in his *Informator* 83 notes.

15...♙a5?!

More precise is 15...a3! 16 b3 ♙a5 17 ♙d2 ♖b6 ("Black has counterplay" – Acs) 18 ♙fe1 ♖xc4 19 bxc4 ♙f5 with a comfortable position for Black as he has safely completed his development.

16 ♙d2 ♖b6 17 ♙d3 ♙e6

Black could consider 17...♙h5!? to exploit the absence of any white pieces on the kingside.

18 ♙fe1

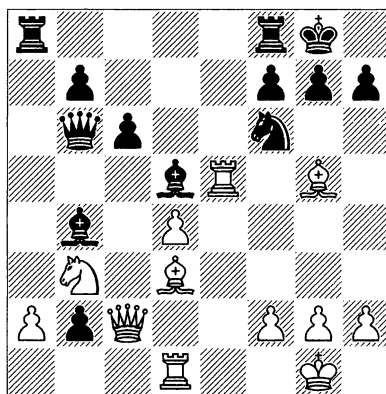
18 a3?! ♙xc3 19 ♙xc3 ♙g5 20 ♙de1 ♙fe8 is comfortable for Black thanks to his iron grip on the d5-square.

18...a3! 19 ♙e5 ♖bd5 20 ♖b3

20 ♖xd5?! cannot be recommended due to 20...♙xd5 21 bxa3 ♙xd2 22 ♙xd2 ♙xa3 with a slight advantage for Black because his superior pawn-structure.

20...♙b6 21 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 22 ♙g5 axb2 (D)

W



23 ♙xb2?

The immediate pawn recapture loses too much time and leaves the white queen out of play. White should ruin Black's kingside pawn-structure by 23 ♙xf6! gxf6 24 ♙e3 ♙fe8 (not 24...♙d6? 25 ♙e2 and White has a decisive kingside attack, Profit-Bokar, ICCF e-mail 2001) 25 ♙xh7+ ♖f8 26 ♙xb2 ♙d6 27 ♙e2 ♙xb3 28 axb3 ♙xb3 29 ♙d3 with an advantage for White because of his more secure king position.

23...♖g4 24 ♙f5 ♙c7

Black has seized the initiative on the kingside and he also has the superior pawn-structure on the queenside.

25 ♠f4 ♠d6 26 g3 ♠e6 27 ♠xd6 ♣xd6 28 ♣c5 ♠d5 29 h3 ♠f6

White hangs on after 29...♠e3?! 30 ♠e1 b6 31 ♠cc1 with chances for a successful defence.

30 ♠c4?!

This loses a pawn, but even after 30 ♠e1 ♠fe8 (30...h5!?) 31 ♠cc1 ♣b4 the vulnerability of White's isolated pawns is highlighted.

30...♠xc4! 31 ♠xc4 ♣e6 32 d5

White tries to confuse matters as 32 ♠c5 ♣xh3 is hopeless for him.

32...cxd5

Also sufficient is 32...♠xd5 33 ♣c2 f5 34 ♠c5 ♣f7 with a solid extra pawn.

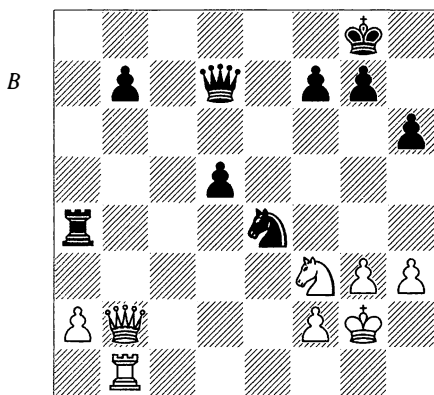
33 ♠h4 ♠fe8 34 ♠d4 ♣d7 35 ♠b1 h6

35...h5!? (intending ...g5) 36 ♣d2 ♠e5 also favours Black.

36 ♠g2

36 ♣xb7? ♣xb7 37 ♠xb7 ♠xa2 38 ♠f4 ♠e4 gives Black a decisive advantage – Acs.

36...♠a4 37 ♠f4 ♠e4 38 ♠xe4 ♠xe4 39 ♠f3 (D)



39...♠f5?

Black should play the direct 39...b5! 40 ♣b3 (40 ♣xb5 ♣xb5 41 ♠xb5 ♠xa2 42 ♠d4 ♠xf2+ 43 ♠g1 ♠d2 is winning for Black) 40...b4 with a clear advantage – Acs.

40 ♣b3

40 ♣xb7! ♠xa2 41 ♠b2 is relatively best, although White is still a pawn down.

40...♠a6?!

Acs recommends 40...♠c5!; for example, 41 ♣b2 ♠d3 42 ♣e2 ♣e4 with a large advantage for Black.

41 ♠b2

After 41 ♣xb7 Black may choose between the straightforward 41...♠xa2 with an extra pawn, or the sharper 41...♠f6!? 42 ♠b3 h5 intending ...g5 and ...g4.

41...♠f6 42 ♣e3 ♣d7 43 ♣d4 ♣e6!? 44 ♣e5?!

Black obtains a strong attack after 44 ♠xb7 ♠xf3! 45 ♠xf3 ♠g5+ 46 ♠f4 (46 ♠g2?? ♣xh3+ 47 ♠g1 ♠f3#) 46...♠xh3+ 47 ♠f3 ♠g5+ 48 ♠f4 ♣e2! 49 ♣e3 ♣c4+ 50 ♠e5 d4! 51 ♠b8+ ♠h7 52 ♣b3 ♣c5+ 53 ♠f4 (53 ♣d5 f6+ is a win for Black) 53...♣d6+ 54 ♠g4 ♣c6 and Black has a mating-net; for example, 55 f4 f5+ 56 ♠xf5 g6+ 57 ♠e5 (57 ♠g4 ♣d7+ mates) 57...♠f3+ and Black wins.

44...♣xe5 45 ♠xe5 ♠c5 46 ♠d2 ♠d6 47 ♠d3

Postny recognizes that his best chance to obtain a draw is in a rook endgame.

47...♠xd3?

Acs was in time-pressure – he recommends 47...♠e6 or 47...b6.

48 ♠xd3 ♠f8 49 ♠f3 ♠e7 50 ♠b3 b6 51 ♠e3 ♠c6 52 ♠d3 g5 53 ♠b1?

White should use his king by 53 ♠d4! ♠e6 (53...♠d6 54 ♠b4 h5!? is another try) 54 ♠b5 ♠c4+ 55 ♠d3 ♠a4 56 ♠xb6+ ♠e5 57 ♠xh6 with equal chances according to Acs.

53...♠d6 54 ♠b2 ♠e5 55 ♠e2+ ♠d6 56 ♠e8 ♠c5 57 ♠f8 ♠f6?

Black should play 57...♠c7! 58 a4 ♠b4 with a clear advantage – Acs.

58 ♠c8+ ♠d6 59 ♠e3 ♠e6+ 60 ♠d3 ♠f6 61 ♠e3 ♠e5 62 ♠e8+ ♠e6

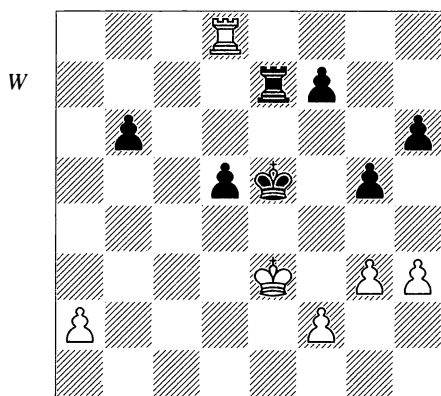
Black must avoid 62...♠f5? 63 g4+! ♠g6 64 ♠d8 ♠e6+ 65 ♠d3 ♠f6 66 ♠e3, when White is able to hold the position thanks to his active rook.

63 ♠d8 ♠e7 (D)

64 ♠d3

Another idea is 64 f4+!? gxf4+ 65 gxf4+ ♠e6 66 ♠d4 ♠a7 67 ♠e8+ ♠f5 68 ♠h8 ♠xa2 69 ♠xh6 ♠d2+ 70 ♠e3 ♠b2 71 ♠d4. Acs doesn't give an evaluation of this position, but Black can try 71...♠b5 72 ♠d6 ♠b1 with some winning chances.

64...♠a7! 65 ♠e8+ ♠d6 66 ♠d8+ ♠e6 67 ♠e8+ ♠d7 68 ♠e2?



The white rook is too passive on the second rank. 68 ♖f8!?, as suggested by Acs, gives White more opportunities for active counterplay.

68...♙d6 69 ♜b2 ♜a3+ 70 ♙d4 ♜a4+ 71 ♙d3 ♙c5 72 ♙c2+ ♙c4

Black has consolidated his extra pawn. The next step is to advance his king.

73 ♜e2 ♜d4+ 74 ♙c3 ♜e4 75 ♜b2 b5 76 ♙d3 b4 77 ♜c2+ ♜c4 78 ♜e2 ♜c3+ 79 ♙d2 ♜a3

Black forces the white king to a passive position on the back rank.

80 ♙c1 ♙c4 81 ♙b2 ♜f3 82 ♜c2+ ♜c3 83 ♜e2 d4 84 ♜e7 ♜f3 85 ♜c7+ ♙d3 86 ♜c2 ♙e4 87 ♙b1 ♙d5 88 ♜b2 ♙c4 89 ♙c1 d3 90 ♙d1 h5

Black's pieces are optimally placed and White has no adequate defence to the threat of ...h4, winning another pawn.

91 h4 gxh4 92 gxh4 ♜f4 0-1

Game 17 [D55]

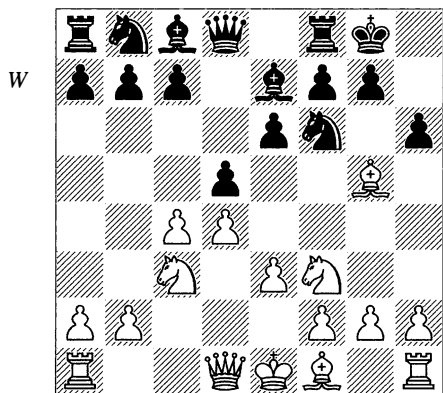
Stelios Halkias – Andrei Rychagov

Greek Team Ch, Kallithea 2002

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7

4...♘bd7 was covered in Game 16. Black can play ...♘bd7 prior to ...♙e7 if his intention is to play the Classical Defence (Chapter 8).

5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 h6 (D)



7 ♙xf6

This exchange of White's dark-squared bishop for Black's king's knight is known as the Anti-Tartakower Variation. I suppose this

line could also have been named the Anti-Lasker Variation, but the Tartakower is a more popular line so the name stuck. White's strategy is to keep the pawn-structure stable to exploit the versatility of the knight in closed positions. Conversely, Black's strategy is carefully to open lines for the bishop-pair. The theory of the Anti-Tartakower Variation was greatly expanded during the first three Kasparov-Karpov world championship matches because the players contested nine games in this line; Kasparov directed the white pieces in five of these battles.

The alternative is of course 7 ♙h4, when 7...♘e4 (Lasker Defence) is the subject of Game 18, while Chapter 7 is devoted to 7...b6 (Tartakower Defence).

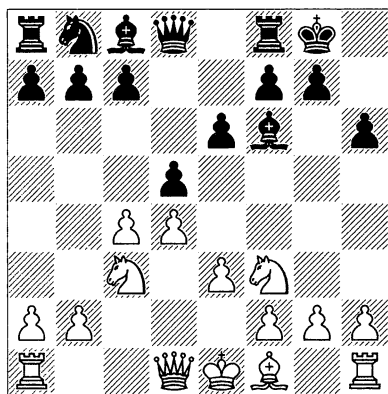
7...♙xf6 (D)

8 ♜c1

White reinforces his c3-knight. Other moves allow Black to free his position more quickly with the ...c5 pawn advance:

a) 8 ♜c2 c5 9 dxc5 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 ♘d7 and then:

W



a1) 11 c6 ♖e5 12 ♜xe5 ♙xe5 13 f4!? bxc6 14 ♜d1 (after 14 fxe5? ♜h4+ Black recovers the piece) 14...♜e7 15 0-0 ♙c7 with sharp play, Wiedenkiller-Barsov, Germany 2002/3.

a2) 11 ♜e4 ♜xc5 12 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 13 0-0 ♙d7 14 ♜fd1 ♜fc8 with equal chances, Hal-kias-Atalik, Kavala 2005.

b) 8 ♜d2 dxc4 9 ♙xc4 ♜d7 10 0-0 c5 11 ♜fd1 cxd4 12 ♜xd4 (White recaptures with the knight to keep the d-file open for his major pieces) 12...♜b6 13 ♙e2 ♙d7 14 ♙f3 ♜b8, with a balanced game, was first played in Karpov-Kasparov, World Ch match (game 6), Moscow 1985.

c) 8 ♜b3 c5! 9 cxd5 cxd4 10 ♜xd4 exd5 and here:

c1) 11 ♙e2 ♜c6 12 ♜d1 ♙xd4 13 exd4 ♜h4 14 ♜a4 ♙g4 15 ♙xg4 ♜xg4 16 0-0 ♜ad8 17 h3 ♜d7 1/2-1/2 Christiansen-Portisch, Reggio Emilia 1987/8.

c2) 11 ♜xd5 ♜b6 12 0-0-0 ♜c6 13 ♜b5 ♜xd4! 14 ♜xb6 axb6 15 exd4 (Kruppa-Van der Stricht, Cappelle la Grande 2005) 15...♜d8! and Black recovers the pawn with a comfortable position.

8...c6

Black can also play 8...a6!?, and then:

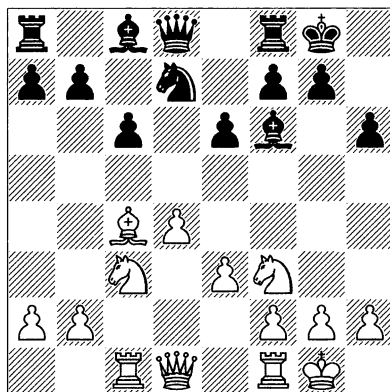
a) 9 ♙d3 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 ♜d7 11 ♜e4 b6 12 0-0 ♙b7 13 ♙d3 ♙e7 14 ♜e2 c5 with equal chances, Andersson-Short, Wijk aan Zee 1987.

b) 9 a3 c6 10 e4 dxe4 11 ♜xe4 c5! (Black finds a creative way to free his position) 12 ♜xc5 ♜c6 13 b4 ♜xd4 14 ♙d3 a5 (14...b6!? 15 ♙e4 ♜a7 16 ♜d3 e5 is comfortable for Black thanks to his strong knight outpost) 15

0-0 axb4 16 axb4 ♜a3 with equal chances, Mikhailchishin-Sobura, Karvina 1987.

9 ♙d3 ♜d7 10 0-0 dxc4 11 ♙xc4 (D)

B



11...e5

An alternative strategy is 11...c5!? 12 ♜e2 a6 (White's pieces are well-placed in the IQP position arising after 12...cxd4 13 exd4 ♜b6 14 ♙d3 g6 15 ♜e4 ♙g7 16 ♜fd1 ♜e8 17 h4!? with a dangerous kingside attack, Ivanchuk-Pigu-sov, Irkutsk 1986) 13 ♜fd1 cxd4 14 ♜xd4 ♜e7 15 ♜e4 ♙e5 16 ♜h5! (this was an improvement over 16 ♜f3 ♙b8 17 ♜d2 b5 18 ♙e2 ♜f6 with equal chances, Kasparov-Karpov, World Ch match (game 12), London/Leningrad 1986) 16...♜d8 17 ♙f1 ♙b8 18 ♜a5 with a queenside initiative for White, Kasparov-H.Olafsson, Dubai Olympiad 1986.

12 h3!

This prophylactic move was popularized by Kasparov. Black has no problems equalizing after other moves:

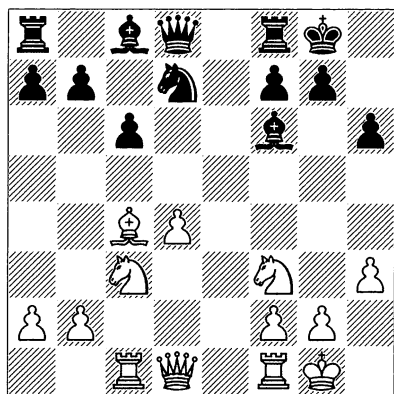
a) 12 ♜e4 exd4 13 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 14 ♜xd4 (14 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜e8 with an equal endgame in Petrosian-Spassky, Spartakiad, Moscow 1979) 14...♜e7 15 ♜b3 c5 16 ♜e2 b6 and the chances are equal, Dementiev-Klovans, Sevastopol 1970.

b) 12 ♙b3 exd4 13 exd4 ♜e8 14 h3 ♜f8 (14...♜b6 is also possible – compare the main line) 15 d5 ♙d7 16 ♜e1 ♜xe1+ 17 ♜xe1 cxd5 with an equal position, Ribli-Karpov, London 1984.

12...exd4 13 exd4 (D)

13...♜b6

B



Black clears a path for the development of his light-squared bishop. Alternatives:

a) 13...c5 14 ♖b3 (14 ♜e4 cxd4 15 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 16 ♜b3 ♜b6 led to a quick draw in Tukmakov-Abramović, Bor 1983) 14...cxd4 15 ♜d5 b6 16 ♜xd4 ♖xd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜c5 18 ♖c4 ♖b7 19 ♜fd1 ♜c8 20 ♜g4! ♖xd5 21 ♜xd5 ♜e7 22 ♜cd1 and White had a slight advantage in the bishop versus knight middlegame in Kasparov-Karpov, World Ch match (game 10), London/Leningrad 1986.

b) 13...♜e8!? 14 ♜b3 ♜f8! (Black appears to have lost a tempo with his rook, but White is compelled to move his queen again to avert the threat of ...♜b6 followed by ...♖e6) 15 ♜c2 (15 ♜d1 repeats the position) 15...♜e8 16 ♜fe1 (16 ♜g6 ♜e7 17 ♜fe1 ♜f8 with equal chances, Dlugy-Abramović, New York 1988) 16...♜f8 17 ♜xe8 (17 ♜b3 ♖e6 18 ♖xe6 ♜xe6 19 ♜xb7 ♜b6 20 ♜xb6 axb6 “and pressure against d4 will soon restore both the material and positional balance.” – Stohl) 17...♜xe8 18 ♜e1 ♖e6 19 d5 cxd5 20 ♜xd5 ♜d8 with equal chances, Kosten-Stohl, Austrian Team Ch 2004/5.

14 ♖b3

This is one of the ideas behind 12 h3!: White prevents a pin involving ...♖g4, so Black is unable to increase the pressure on White's isolated d4-pawn.

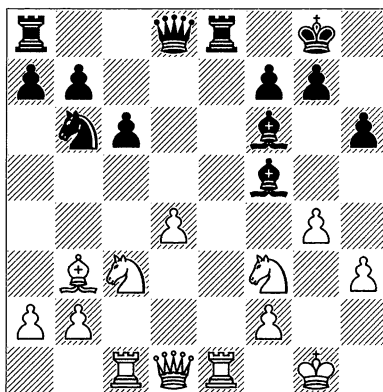
14...♖f5 15 ♜e1 ♜e8

A popular alternative is 15...a5!? 16 a3 ♜e8, as in Kasparov-Karpov, World Ch match (game 22), London/Leningrad 1986. This game is annotated by Igor Stohl in *Garry Kasparov's Greatest Chess Games, Volume 1*.

16 g4!? (D)

White gains some space on the kingside, but the drawback of this aggressive pawn advance is the newly-created weakness on the f4-square. A quieter alternative is 16 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 17 ♜d2 ♜d7 18 ♜e1 ♜d5 (18...a5!?) 19 ♜e5 ♜d6 with a balanced game, Vokač-Hraček, Czech Extraliga 2000/1.

B



16...♖e6

Black seeks to eliminate White's most active piece, even at the cost of incurring an isolated e6-pawn. Alternatives:

a) 16...♖g6 17 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 18 ♜d2 ♜d7 is equal, Moskalenko-Khalifman, Riga 1988.

b) 16...♜xe1+ 17 ♜xe1 ♖d3 18 ♜e4 (18 ♜e5 ♖xe5 {Kasimdzhanov analyses the sharp 18...♜xd4!? as leading to equality} 19 dxe5 c5 20 ♜e3 c4 21 ♖d1 ♜e7 with equal chances, Bacrot-Siegel, French Team Ch 1998) 18...♖xe4 19 ♜xe4 ♜d5 20 ♖xd5 (20 ♜c5 ♖e7) 20...cxd5 21 ♜f5 ♜b6! 22 ♜c8+ (after 22 ♜xd5 ♜d8, Black recovers the pawn) 22...♜xc8 23 ♜xc8+ ♖h7 24 ♜f5+ ♖g8 25 ♜c8+ (25 ♜xd5 ♜xb2 maintains the balance) 25...♖h7 26 ♜f5+ ♖g8 1/2-1/2 Piket-Kasimdzhanov, Vlissingen 2001.

17 ♖xe6 ♜xe6 18 ♜xe6 fxe6

The position is balanced as both sides have an isolated pawn to defend.

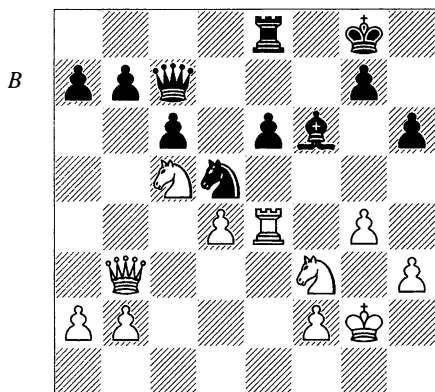
19 ♜b3

Halkias introduces a new idea designed to generate some pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal. White has also tried 19 ♜e2 ♜e7 20 ♜e1 ♜e8 21 ♜c2 ♜f7 with equal chances, Gelfand-Kramnik, Dortmund 1997.

19...♖e7 20 ♜e1 ♜e8 21 ♔g2

White improves the position of his king and lends support to his f3-knight.

21...♞d7 22 ♘e4 ♘d5 23 ♘c5 ♞c7 24 ♜e4 (D)



24...b6

Rychagov sidesteps 24...♘f4+? 25 ♜xf4! ♞xf4 26 ♘xe6 ♜xe6 (26...♞d6 27 ♘c7+ ♔f8 28 ♘xe8 ♔xe8 29 ♞xb7 wins for White) 27 ♞xe6+ ♔h7 28 ♞e3, when White has won a pawn.

25 ♘d3

White has succeeded in covering the sensitive f4-square, but the black knight on d5 is a monster and it is difficult to see how White can generate an attack on Black's isolated e6-pawn.

25...♞d6 26 ♞c2 ♜f8 27 ♞e2 ♜e8 28 a3 a5 29 h4!?

White makes use of his last available lever to try to increase the pressure. The idea is to drive

the black bishop backward and pry open the kingside.

29...♞e7 30 ♔g3 ♞d6+ 31 ♔g2 ♞e7 32 ♔g3 ♞d6+ 33 ♔h3!?

Halkias boldly plays for a win. The calm 33 ♔g2 repeats the position.

33...♙d8 34 g5 hxg5?!

Black should manoeuvre his queen to the kingside by 34...♞f8! 35 ♔g2 (35 ♜xe6?? ♞f5+ costs White his rook) 35...♞f5 36 gxf6 gxf6 (36...♞g6+!? 37 ♔f1 ♞xf6) 37 ♘fe5 ♙f6 38 ♞g4+ ♔h7 with equal chances.

35 ♘xg5 ♙xg5

Black exchanges the knight as after 35...♙c7 36 f4 ♞d7 37 ♘e5 ♙xe5 38 fxe5 White has strong kingside threats.

36 hxg5 ♜f8 37 ♔g2

The last winning attempt is the bold 37 ♜xe6!? ♘f4+ (37...♞d7 38 ♔g3) 38 ♘xf4 ♞xf4, and then:

a) 39 ♞e3 ♞xf2 40 ♞xf2 ♜xf2 41 ♜xc6 ♜xb2 42 ♔g4 ♔f7 with equal chances.

b) 39 g6!? (White's king is somewhat exposed, but Black's king is also vulnerable due to the weak back rank) 39...♞h6+ (39...♞f5+ 40 ♔g2 ♞g5+ – 39...♞h6+ 40 ♔g2 ♞g5+) 40 ♔g2 ♞g5+ 41 ♔f1 ♞c1+ 42 ♞e1 (42 ♔g2 ♞g5+ repeats the position) 42...♞c4+ 43 ♔g1 ♞xd4 44 ♜c3!? ♞d6 45 ♜g3 ♞d5 and Black is able to hold the balance.

37...♜f5 38 ♞g4 ♙d8 39 ♔f1

White decides not to press on as 39 ♜e5 ♞d7 maintains the equilibrium.

39...♞xg5 40 ♞xg5 ♞xg5 41 ♜xe6 ♜g4 42 ♜xc6 ♜xd4 1/2-1/2

Game 18 [D56]

Vasily Ivanchuk – Alexander Onishchuk

World Team Ch, Beersheba 2005

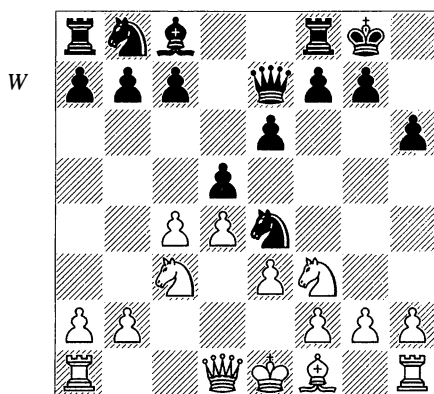
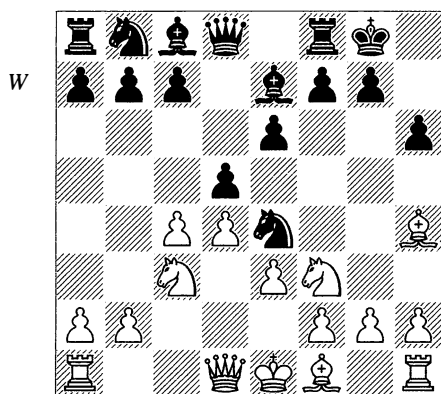
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 h6 7 ♙h4

The Anti-Tartakower (and Anti-Lasker) Variation 7 ♙xf6 was covered in Game 17.

7...♘e4 (D)

7...b6 (Tartakower Defence) is the subject of Chapter 7.

This is the characteristic move of the Lasker Defence: Black seeks to free his position by exchanging two sets of minor pieces. White must play very accurately to have any hope of obtaining an opening advantage versus the Lasker Defence. The line has a deserved reputation as a sound and solid defence. The leading



modern exponent of this line is Artur Yusupov.

8 ♖xe7

Other moves are relatively rare:

a) 8 ♜xe4 dxe4 (the sharp 8...♙xh4!? 9 ♜c3 ♖e7 is unexplored) 9 ♖xe7 ♜xe7 – 8 ♖xe7 ♜xe7 9 ♜xe4 dxe4.

b) 8 ♖g3 and now:

b1) 8...♙b4!? 9 ♜c2 (Black has prompted White to lend support to the c3-knight with his queen, but White often plays ♜c2 anyway in this type of IQP position) 9...c5 10 ♖d3 cxd4 11 exd4 ♜xg3 12 hxg3 dxc4 13 ♖xc4 ♜c6 14 ♖d1 ♖d7 with equal chances, Cebalo-Yusupov, Bastia rapid 2004.

b2) 8...c5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♖d3 ♖f5 11 0-0 ♜c6 12 dxc5 ♖xc5 13 ♖c1 ♖e7 and Black has a satisfactory Tarrasch-style position, Ashley-Marciano, Cannes 1998.

8...♜xe7 (D)

Black must avoid 8...♜xc3?? 9 ♖xd8 (White missed his chance with 9 ♜c2?? in Halkias-Miladinović, Cutro 2001) 9...♜xd1 10 ♖e7 ♜xb2 (10...♖e8 11 ♖a3 traps the wayward knight) 11 ♖xf8 ♜xf8 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♖b1 with a decisive material advantage for White, B.Addison-Debbage, Witley 1998.

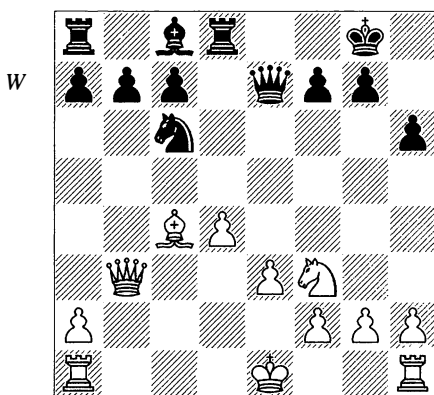
9 ♖c1

White has a wide choice of other moves here, of which lines 'c' and 'd' are the most critical:

a) 9 ♜xe4 dxe4 10 ♜d2 f5 11 c5 e5 (Black counters in the centre and activates his light-squared bishop) 12 ♜b3+ ♜h8 with a comfortable position for Black, Spassky-Lutikov, USSR Ch, Moscow 1961.

b) 9 ♖d3 ♜xc3 10 bxc3 c5 11 0-0 ♜c6 12 cxd5 exd5 with equal chances, Chatalbashev-Komarov, Reggio Emilia 2004/5.

c) 9 cxd5 (White opens the c8-h3 diagonal for Black's light-squared bishop, but in return he can quickly obtain a central pawn-majority) 9...♜xc3 (Black is compelled to capture the c3-knight; this gives White another c-pawn to use as a lever to undermine Black's d5-pawn) 10 bxc3 exd5 11 ♜b3 ♖d8 12 c4 (this pawn advance is the justification for White's 9th move) 12...dxc4 13 ♖xc4 ♜c6 (D) (Black temporarily blocks his c-pawn because the threat of ...♜a5 forces White to expend a tempo to preserve his valuable light-squared bishop) and now:



c1) 14 ♜c3 ♖g4 15 0-0 ♖xf3 16 gxf3 (White allows his pawns to be doubled in the hope of exploiting his strong centre and powerful bishop) 16...♜f6 17 ♖e2 ♖ac8 intending ...♜e7 and ...c5 with a sharp but balanced

position, Karpov-Yusupov, Candidates match (game 6), London 1989; Yusupov's *Informator* 48 notes to this game are very instructive.

c2) 14 ♖e2 b6 15 0-0 ♖b7 16 ♜fc1 ♜ac8 17 ♞a4 ♜a5 with equal chances, *Deep Fritz*-Kramnik, match (game 5), Manama 2002.

d) 9 ♞c2 c6 10 ♖d3 ♜xc3 11 ♞xc3 dxc4 (Black exchanges his d5-pawn for White's c4-pawn in preparation for playing a future ...c5 pawn-break; this avoids the possibility of White meeting ...c5 with cxd5, giving Black an isolated d5-pawn) 12 ♖xc4 ♜d7 13 0-0 b6 and then:

d1) 14 b4 ♖b7 15 ♖e2 a5! 16 ♜fb1 (16 a3 axb4 17 axb4 c5 18 bxc5 1/2-1/2 Hort-Keres, Sarajevo 1972) 16...axb4 17 ♜xb4 ♖a6 (17...c5!? 18 dxc5 ♜xc5) 18 ♖xa6 1/2-1/2 Bluvshstein-I.Rogers, Tuggeranong 2007.

d2) 14 e4 ♖b7 15 ♜fe1 c5 16 d5 exd5 17 exd5 ♞f6 18 ♞xf6 ♜xf6 19 ♜ad1 ♜ad8 with equal chances, Szabo-Portisch, Sarajevo 1963.

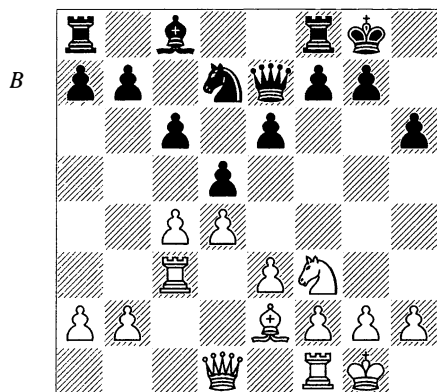
9...♜xc3

Black can also employ the move-order 9...c6 10 ♖d3 ♜xc3 11 ♜xc3 – 9...♜xc3 10 ♜xc3 c6 11 ♖d3.

10 ♜xc3 c6 11 ♖e2

Another common transposition is 11 ♖d3 ♜d7 12 0-0 dxc4 13 ♖xc4 – 11 ♖e2 ♜d7 12 0-0 dxc4 13 ♖xc4.

11...♜d7 12 0-0 (D)



12...♜e8!?

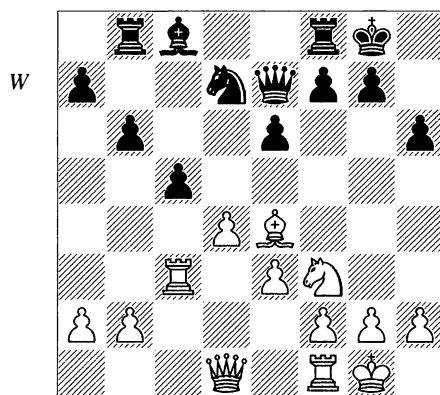
Onishchuk plays a preparatory move in support of the ...e5 pawn-break. Black's most popular continuation is 12...dxc4 13 ♖xc4, and now:

a) 13...e5 14 ♖b3 and then:

a1) 14...exd4?! (opening the centre is risky with Black's pawn on h6 because the g6-square is weakened; compare this with the main line of the Classical Defence {Game 25}, where Black's pawn is on h7) 15 exd4 ♜f6 16 ♜e1 ♞d6 17 ♜e5! with strong kingside pressure, Karpov-Yusupov, Candidates match (game 8), London 1989, and several subsequent games.

a2) 14...e4 15 ♜d2 ♜f6 16 ♜c5 ♖g4 17 ♞b1 ♜d7 18 ♜c3 ♖e2 19 ♜fc1! (the rook belongs on the half-open c-file; less precise is 19 ♜e1 ♖d3 20 ♖c2 ♖xc2 21 ♞xc2 ♜fe8 with equal chances, Atalik-Zelčić, Bled 2000) 19...♖d3 20 ♖c2 ♖xc2 21 ♞xc2 ♜fe8 (this is safer than 21...♜f6?! 22 ♜c5 with an advantage for White, P.Cramling-Marciano, France 2000) 22 b4!? with a slight advantage for White as he can generate play on the queenside. This position can also be reached from the main line of the Classical Defence (see the note to Black's 13th move in Game 25) with the difference that here Black's pawn is on h6 instead of h7. The difference is not significant since the centre is closed.

b) 13...b6 14 ♖d3 c5 15 ♖e4 ♜b8 (D) and here:



b1) 16 ♞a4 ♜f6!/? (16...♖b7 17 ♖xb7 ♜xb7 18 ♞c2 a5!/? {Dolmatov's suggestion: the idea is to prevent White from playing a timely b4 pawn advance in some lines} 19 ♜d1 ♜e8 20 h3 e5! 21 dxe5 ♜xe5 22 ♜xe5 ♞xe5 23 ♜cd3 ♜be7 24 ♜d5 1/2-1/2 Anand-Kramnik, Amber blindfold, Monte Carlo 2001) 17 ♖c6 cxd4 18 exd4 a6 19 ♜e5 ♖b7 20 ♜fc1 ♜d5! (Black

offers a pawn sacrifice for active play) 21 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 with sharp play, Zviagintsev-Bologan, Poikovsky 2003.

b2) 16 ♖c2 ♖b7 17 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 18 h3 ♖e8 19 ♖d1 a5 20 ♖d2 (Kramnik-Karpov, Amber rapid, Monte Carlo 2000) 20...e5! (Kramnik's plan from line 'b1' above except here the white rook is on d2; the difference is insignificant) 21 dxe5 ♖xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 23 ♖cd3 ♖be7 with equal chances.

13 ♖c2

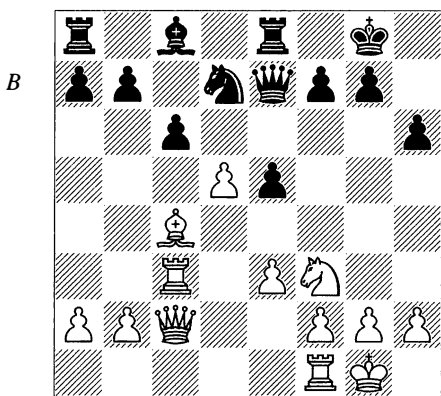
Black has a satisfactory form of Exchange Variation after 13 cxd5 exd5 14 ♖d3 ♖f6 intending ...♖e4 with a balanced game.

13...dxc4

The pawn exchange is necessary because the immediate 13...e5? walks into 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 ♖c7 with strong queenside pressure.

14 ♖xc4 e5 15 d5! (D)

The disruptive pawn advance is more challenging than 15 ♖b3 exd4 16 exd4 ♖d6 17 ♖e3 ♖f6 18 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 19 ♖e1 ♖c7! (this is a very important idea in such positions: Black prepares ...♖e6 to counter White's b3-bishop) 20 ♖e4 ♖e6 21 ♖c2 g6 22 ♖e3 (Zimmer-de los Santos Serrano, ICCF corr. 1998) 22...♖g7 with equal chances.



15...♖b6!

Onishchuk introduces a new idea. An earlier game, M.Gurevich-Hamdouchi, Belfort 2003, continued 15...e4 16 ♖d4 c5 17 ♖b5 ♖e5 18 d6 ♖f8 19 ♖d1 and White had a clear advantage because of his superior development combined with the cramping effect of the d6-pawn.

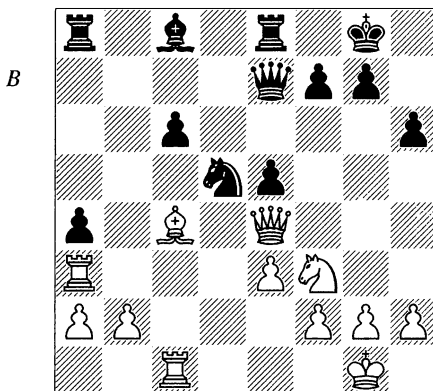
16 dxc6 bxc6 17 ♖c1 ♖d5 18 ♖b3

White maintains the tension. Another idea is to utilize the build-up of heavy pieces along the c-file at the cost of straightening out Black's pawn-structure by 18 ♖xd5 cxd5 19 ♖c7 ♖f6 (after 19...♖d6?! 20 ♖c5 ♖xc5 21 ♖1xc5 White wins a pawn) 20 ♖c5 ♖e6 21 ♖d6 d4! 22 exd4 exd4 23 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 24 ♖xd4 ♖xa2 with an equal endgame.

18...a5 19 ♖e4 a4

Black could consider the provocative idea 19...♖b4!? 20 ♖bc3 (20 a3 ♖d5 is fine for Black despite the apparent loss of tempo, as the white rook has been prevented from using the a3-square) 20...♖f6 with roughly equal chances.

20 ♖a3 (D)



20...♖d7!?

Black offers a speculative pawn sacrifice. Alternatives:

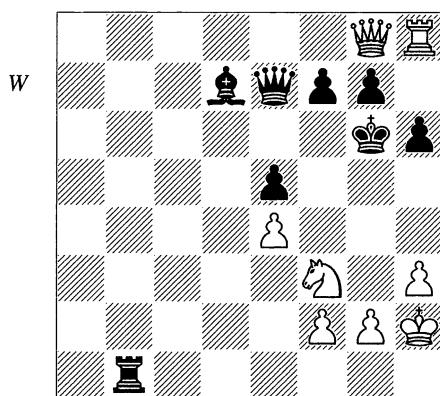
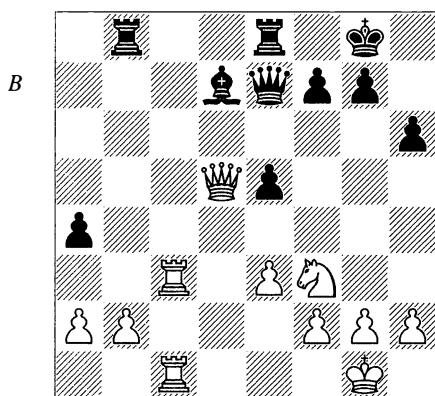
a) 20...♖b7 21 ♖h4 gives White a clear advantage according to Ivanchuk. This line highlights the importance of retaining control over the f5-square.

b) 20...♖b7!? with the idea of ...♖f6 was attributed to Onishchuk by Ivanchuk in his *Informator* 95 notes. One possibility is 21 ♖b1 ♖f6 22 ♖c2 ♖g4 23 e4 ♖xf3 24 ♖xf3 ♖ed8 with a balanced game.

21 ♖xd5 cxd5 22 ♖xd5 ♖ab8 23 ♖ac3 (D)

23...♖g4?!

Black should play the ruthless 23...♖xb2! ('?' – Ivanchuk) 24 ♖c7 (White has a decisive advantage according to Ivanchuk, but I think Black is OK because of White's vulnerable



back rank) 24...♖d8 25 ♜d1 (25 h3 e4 26 ♘d4 ♜e8 is fine for Black) 25...♜bb8! 26 h3 ♙e6! 27 ♜xe7 ♜xd5 28 ♜xd5 ♙xd5 29 ♘xe5 ♙xa2 30 ♜a7 ♙b3 with an equal endgame.

24 b3

White has emerged from the complications with an extra pawn, but the realization of his advantage is a long and difficult process because Black's pieces are very active.

24...axb3 25 axb3 ♜b4 26 ♘e1 ♜d8 27 ♜a5 ♜db8 28 h3

White finally creates some much-needed *luft* for his king.

28...♜4b5 29 ♜a1 ♙e6 30 ♘f3 ♙xb3?

Ivanchuk recommends 30...♜b4! here, when White is going to have a hard time mobilizing his extra pawn.

31 ♜c8+!

White is able to launch an attack by exploiting Black's vulnerable back rank.

31...♜xc8

The lesser evil is 31...♙h7 32 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 33 ♘xe5, when White has a clear extra pawn.

32 ♜xc8+ ♙h7 33 ♜a8 ♜d5 34 ♜b8 ♙a4 35 e4! ♜b5 36 ♜h8+ ♙g6 37 ♜g8

White's attack should be decisive because Black's pieces are too far away to come to the defence of his king.

37...♜b1+ 38 ♙h2 ♙d7 (D)

39 ♜h7+?!

Ivanchuk gives the pretty variation 39 ♜h7! ♜f6 (39...f5 loses to 40 ♘h4+) 40 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 41 ♘xe5+ ♙f6 42 ♘xd7+ ♙g6 43 ♘f8+ ♙f6 44 e5+ and White wins the black queen.

39...♙f6 40 ♜g8 ♙e6 41 ♜xg7

White has won a pawn and Black's king is feeling a cold draught in the centre of the board.

41...♜f6 42 ♜g3 ♜b5 43 ♜a8 ♙e7 44 ♜g8 ♜f4+ 45 g3 ♜xf3 46 ♜d8+ ♙d6 47 ♜a6+ ♙c5 48 ♜e7+?!

White can wend his way to victory with 48 ♜c7+ ♙b4 (48...♙d4 49 ♜d6+ ♙xe4 50 ♜c2+ mates) 49 ♜c2, and now:

a) 49...♜b7 50 ♜a1! (Ivanchuk) 50...♙e6 51 ♜d2+ ♙b5 52 ♜b1+ ♙b3 (52...♙c6 53 ♜c2+ wins the rook) 53 ♜d5+ ♙a4 54 ♜a1+ and White wins.

b) 49...♜c5 50 ♜b2+ ♜b3 (50...♙c4 loses to 51 ♜a1! {Ivanchuk}) 51...♜xe4 52 ♜a2+ ♙b5 53 ♜a5+ ♙c4 {or 53...♙c6 54 ♜a8+ ♙c7 55 ♜xe4} 54 ♜c1+) 51 ♜d2+ ♙b5 52 ♜a8 ♙c6 53 ♜xh6+ ♙c7 (53...♙e6 54 ♜c8+ wins for White) 54 ♜a7+ and White has a decisive advantage – Ivanchuk.

48...♙c4 49 ♜a4+ ♙c3 50 ♜a3+ ♜b3 51 ♜xe5+ ♙c2?

This is the decisive error. Black can hang on with 51...♙d2 52 ♜d5+ (52 ♜d4+ ♜d3 53 ♜a2+ ♙d1 54 ♜a1+ is also perpetual check) 52...♙c2 53 ♜c4+ ♜c3 54 ♜e2+ ♙c1 55 ♜f1+ with a draw by perpetual check – Ivanchuk.

52 ♜a2+ ♙c1

White wins after 52...♙d3 53 ♜d5+ ♙c3 54 ♜xd7.

53 ♜a1+ ♜b1 54 ♜d4 1-0

The finish would be 54...♜b7 55 ♜d2+ ♙b1 56 ♜c2#. A tremendous game by both players and a tough break for Onishchuk at the end.

7 Tartakower Defence

Introduction

The Tartakower Defence arises after the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 h6 7 ♙h4 b6. Black prepares to fianchetto his light-squared bishop to increase his control over the e4-square. If White reacts passively, Black will enhance the b7-bishop with the complementary moves ...♘bd7 and ...c5 to free his queenside and create a potent position in which all of his minor pieces are actively deployed. The paradox of the Tartakower Defence is that in one of the main lines of the variation (Game 21), Black frequently develops his light-squared bishop to e6 rather than b7; this is because White reacts to the fianchetto 'threat' by transforming the central pawn-structure so that the d5-square is occupied by an immobilized black pawn.

The Tartakower has a reputation for being a rock-solid defence; the opening has been a frequent guest in world championship matches and qualifying events. Kasparov and Karpov contested thirteen world championship games in this opening, with Kasparov directing the white pieces in seven of these battles.

The Games

Game 19 (Sargissian-Halkias) is a Tartakower featuring the currently fashionable line 8 ♙d3 ♙b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♙g3; this is known as Romanishin's line. White quickly gives Black a set of hanging pawns, but Black's pieces are well-placed and the hanging pawns control important space in the centre of the board. Sargissian is slowly driven back and Halkias is able to use his space advantage to launch a relentless kingside attack. The keypoint to take away from this game is an appreciation that hanging pawns in combination with well-placed pieces are a strength rather than a weakness.

In **Game 20** (Onishchuk-Rychagov), White plays the variation 8 ♙e2 ♙b7 9 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4. This line is loosely related to the Anti-Tartakower (and Anti-Lasker) Variation discussed in Game 17 because White voluntarily concedes the bishop-pair in the hope of exploiting his more flexible pawn-structure. Onishchuk builds up a central advantage and Rychagov neglects to complete the development of his queenside. This gives White the opportunity to sacrifice a piece and obtain a strong attack.

Game 21 (Kasimdzhanov-Bologan) features the line 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♞c1 ♙e6. Bologan expands on the queenside with ...c5; several moves later Kasimdzhanov plays dxc5 and presents Black with a choice of having hanging centre pawns or an isolated d5-pawn. Bologan goes for the isolated d5-pawn, but Kasimdzhanov calmly improves his position and provokes Bologan into advancing his b-pawn. Kasimdzhanov's middlegame play makes a very strong impression as he carefully rounds up the advanced pawn and Bologan never gets another chance for counterplay. This game is a classic demonstration of the typical methods that can be used when facing an isolated d5-pawn and possessing a strong knight that dominates an ineffective bishop.

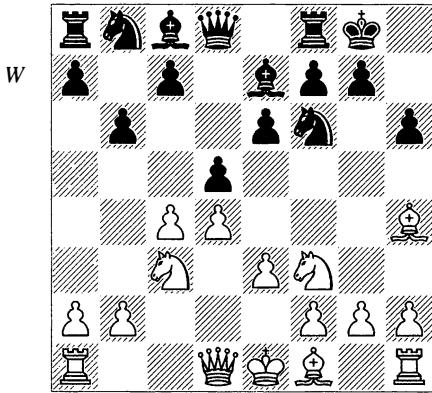
Game 19 [D58]

Gabriel Sargissian – Stelios Halkias

European Ch, Antalya 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0
6 ♙f3 h6 7 ♙h4 b6 (D)

7...♙e4 (Lasker Defence) was the subject of Game 18, and 7...♙bd7 (Classical Defence) is covered in Chapter 8.



This is the characteristic move of the Tartakower Defence, by which Black prepares to fianchetto his light-squared bishop, and the b6-pawn also supports a potential ...c5 pawn advance. The Tartakower has been played by each of the last eight World Champions; the line was a great favourite of Spassky and Karpov.

8 ♙d3

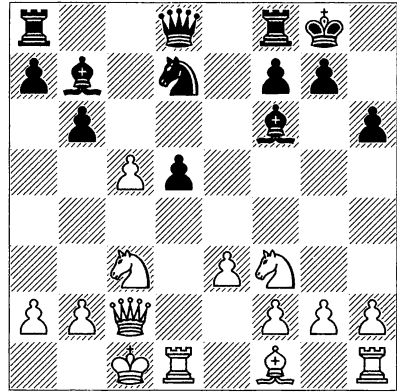
White develops his light-squared bishop to an aggressive post and takes aim at Black's kingside. Alternatives:

a) 8 ♙e2 is the subject of Game 20.

b) 8 cxd5 is discussed in Game 21.

c) 8 ♙c2 ♙b7 9 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 10 cxd5 (note how White waits for Black to play ...♙b7 before implementing the plan of ♙xf6 and cxd5; the idea is to saddle Black with an ineffective light-squared bishop on the b7-square) 10...exd5 11 0-0-0!? (this aggressive plan has fallen out of favour because White's king is too vulnerable on the queenside) 11...c5 12 dxc5 ♙d7! (D) and now:

W



c1) 13 cxb6? (the pawn-grab is too greedy!) 13...♙xc3 14 bxc3 axb6 and Black has tremendous compensation for the pawn because of White's exposed king.

c2) 13 ♙xd5 ♙xc5 14 ♙c4 b5!? with sharp play, Kasparov-I.Zaitsev, Baku 1980.

c3) 13 c6 ♙xc6 14 ♙d4 ♙b7 15 g4!? ♙e5 16 ♙e2 ♙c6! (Ubilava-Kharitonov, Tallinn 1983) 17 h4!? ♙xd4 18 exd4 ♙xh4 19 f4 with compensation for the missing pawn.

d) 8 ♙b3 (one of the ideas behind this move is to apply pressure on the d5-pawn and inhibit Black from playing the ...c5 pawn advance) 8...♙b7 9 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♙d1 ♙e8 and then:

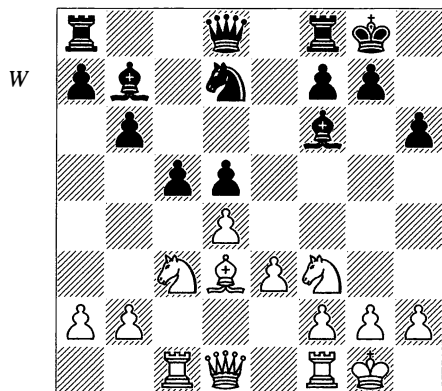
d1) 12 ♙d3 c5 13 dxc5 ♙d7 14 c6 ♙xc6 15 0-0 ♙c5 16 ♙c2 ♙c8 17 ♙h7+ ♙h8 18 ♙f5 ♙e6 is equal, Beliavsky-Kramnik, Belgrade 1997.

d2) 12 a3!? (White avoids blocking the d-file so as to discourage Black from playing ...c5) 12...c6 13 ♙d3 ♙d7 14 0-0 g6 15 ♙b1 ♙g7 with equal chances, Kramnik-Kasparov, match (game 3), Moscow 2001.

e) 8 ♙c1 ♙b7 and here:

e1) 9 ♙e2 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 ♙bd7 11 0-0 c5 12 ♙e2 a6 13 a4 cxd4 14 ♙xd4 ♙c5 15 f3 ♙e8 16 ♙c2 ♙c8 with equal chances, Portisch-Vaganian, Candidates match (game 1), Saint John 1988.

e2) 9 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖d3 c5 12 0-0 ♖d7 (D) and now White can try:



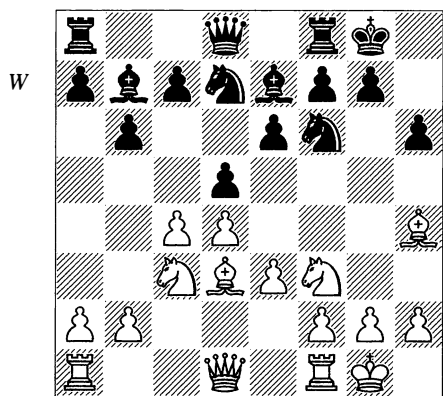
e21) 13 ♖b1 g6! (Short's improvement over 13...♖c8? 14 ♖b5! with an advantage for White, Portisch-Short, World Cup, Rotterdam 1989) 14 ♖a4 ♖e8 15 ♖fd1 cxd4 16 exd4 ♖f8 with equal chances, Karpov-Short, World Cup, Rotterdam 1989.

e22) 13 ♖f5 g6 14 ♖xd7 cxd4 15 ♖c6! (a *zwischenzug* to gain a tempo) 15...♖xc6 (not 15...dxc3?? 16 ♖xb7, when White wins a piece) 16 ♖xd4 ♖b7 17 ♖a4 ♖e7 18 ♖fd1 ♖fc8 with equal chances, Dokhoian-Klovans, Berlin 1992.

8...♖b7 9 0-0

Another common transposition is 9 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖c1 – 8 ♖c1 ♖b7 9 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖d3.

9...♖bd7 (D)



Romanishin's idea: White voluntarily retreats his dark-squared bishop to inhibit Black from playing ...♖e4. White can also play 10 ♖e2 c5 (10...♖e4 is another possibility) 11 ♖g3 – 10 ♖g3 c5 11 ♖e2.

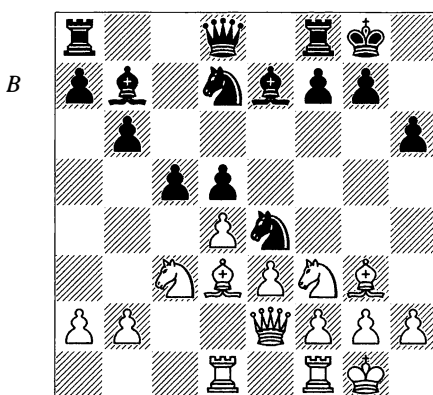
10...c5

Black has also tried 10...♖e4?! 11 ♖xe4 dxe4 12 ♖d2 f5 13 ♖b5 (this is one of the ideas behind White's 10th move: Black cannot adequately defend the c7-pawn) 13...e5 14 dxe5 (14 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 15 dxe5 ♖g5 is fine for Black) 14...♖c5 15 ♖b3 ♖d3 16 ♖c1 with an advantage for White, Zaichik-A.Petrosian, Moscow 1987.

11 ♖e2

Another idea is to open the centre by 11 cxd5 ♖xd5 12 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 13 ♖e2 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖f6 15 ♖fd1 with a slight pull for White, Ivanchuk-Kasimdzhanov, FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004.

11...♖e4 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♖ad1 (D)



13...♖c8

Black maintains the central tension and sidesteps any potential trouble along the d-file. Alternatives:

a) 13...♖df6 14 dxc5 ♖xc3 15 bxc3 ♖xc5 16 ♖d4 ♖e7 17 ♖h4 ♖e5 with equal chances as both sides have an isolated pawn, Sargisian-Mkrtychian, Erevan 2003, and several earlier games.

b) 13...♖xg3 14 hxg3 and then:

b1) 14...a6?! 15 dxc5! bxc5 16 ♖b1 ♖b6 17 a4! gave White a slight advantage in Kramnik-Yusupov, Dortmund 1998. In chess as in life,

timing is everything: the exchange of one set of minor pieces has increased the vulnerability of Black's hanging pawns.

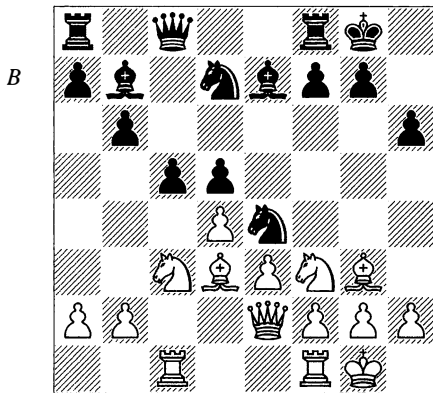
b2) 14...c4 (Black avoids the hanging pawns) 15 ♖b1 ♖b4 16 ♛c2 ♜f6 17 ♜e5 ♝e8 18 g4!? with razor-sharp play; the most recent example is Klimov-Isaevsky, Russia Cup, Sochi 2005.

14 ♜c1 (D)

The white rook continues to shadow the black queen. White's most popular alternative is 14 ♜fe1 ♜df6 15 dxc5, and now:

a) 15...♜xg3 16 hxg3 bxc5 17 e4 dxe4 (1/2-1/2 H.Grünberg-Dorfman, Austrian Team Ch 2002) 18 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 19 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 20 ♛xe4 ♙f6 with an even game.

b) 15...♜xc3 16 bxc3 ♜e4 17 ♙e5 ♙xc5 (17...f6!? 18 c6 ♙xc6 19 ♙d4 ♛e6 also looks reasonable for Black) 18 ♛b2 ♛e6 19 ♙d4 ♜fc8 with equal chances, Pankratov-Andriulaitis, ICCF e-mail 2002.



14...♜df6

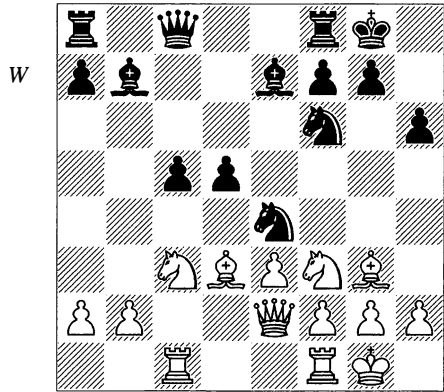
Another viable option is 14...♜d8 15 ♜fd1 ♜df6 16 ♜e5 ♛e6 with equal chances, Bacrot-Ivanchuk, Odessa 2007.

15 dxc5

White decides to give Black a set of hanging pawns; the idea is visually appealing because of the line-up of white rook versus black queen along the c-file. From Black's perspective, the hanging pawns are not a liability in this position because they are well-defended and control the lion's share of the centre. Also, White concedes some space to Black by exchanging his d4-pawn for Black's b6-pawn.

Other moves gives little: 15 ♜e5 ♜xg3 16 hxg3 ♛e6 is comfortable for Black, while after 15 ♙e5 ♜xc3 16 ♜xc3 ♜e4 17 ♜cc1 f6 18 ♙f4 ♛e6 the chances are equal.

15...bxc5 (D)



16 ♜fd1

White continues his central build-up. Alternatives:

a) 16 ♙xe4?! ♜xe4! (this is more incisive than 16...dxe4 17 ♜e5 ♙a6 18 ♜c4 ♛e6 19 b3 ♜fd8 20 ♜fd1 1/2-1/2 Novikov-P.H.Nielsen, New York 2000) 17 ♜xe4 ♙a6 18 ♛c2 ♙xf1! 19 ♜c3 ♙c4 20 b3 d4 favours Black as he has a material advantage.

b) 16 ♙e5 ♜g4! 17 ♙f4 g5!? 18 ♙g3 ♜xg3 19 hxg3 f5 is also good for Black: he has the bishop-pair and a space advantage.

16...♛e6

Black increases his grip on the e4-square and removes his queen from the potentially dangerous c-file.

17 ♙h4 g5

Black gains more time and prevents White from exchanging a set of minor pieces at the cost of a slight weakening of his kingside pawn-structure.

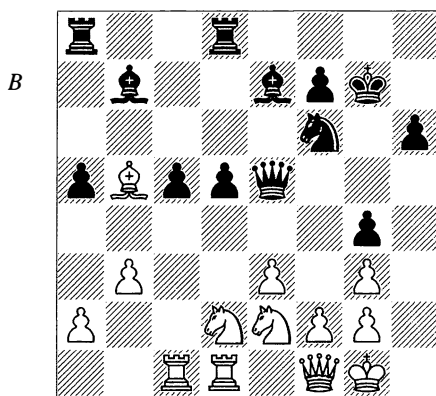
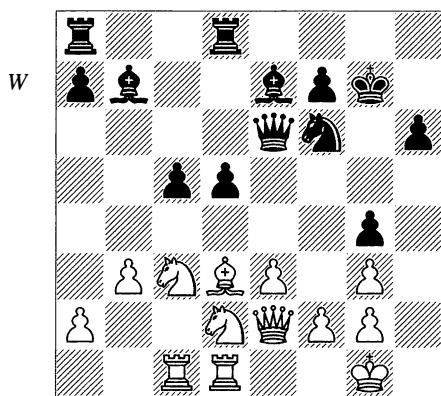
18 ♙g3 ♜fd8 19 ♜d2?!

The voluntary knight retreat is too passive. White should activate his queen and take aim at the f5-square via 19 ♛c2!? ♜xg3 20 hxg3 g4 21 ♜h4 with counterplay.

19...♜xg3 20 hxg3 g4!?

Stelios grabs some space on the kingside.

21 b3 ♙g7 (D)



A very deceptive king move: Black appears to be protecting his h6-pawn, but he is actually clearing the back rank for a rook to shift over to the h-file.

22 ♖f1?

Sargissian vacates the e2-square for his knight, but his queen is poorly situated on the back rank. Relatively best is 22 e4!? dxe4, and now:

a) 23 ♜dxe4? ♜xd3! 24 ♜xd3 ♜xe4 is crushing for Black because his two minor pieces are superior to the white rook.

b) 23 ♜c4 ♜e5 24 ♜e1 ♜d4 25 ♜b5 ♜ad8!? (25... ♜d7 26 ♜c3 with counterplay) 26 ♜xd4 (26 ♜f1!?) 26...cxd4 27 ♜a6 ♜a8 is a promising exchange sacrifice for Black thanks to his mobile centre pawns.

c) 23 ♜b1 e3 24 ♜xe3 (24 fxe3 ♜e5 25 ♜f2 c4! opens lines for Black as 26 ♜xc4? ♜xc3! wins material) 24... ♜xe3 25 fxe3 ♜d5 26 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 27 ♜c4 ♜e8 with just a slight advantage for Black thanks to his pair of bishops.

22...a5 23 ♜e2 ♜e5

The black queen radiates power all over the board. Her majesty is quite safe in the centre because Black's hanging pawns control most of the key central squares and prevent White from activating his minor pieces.

24 ♜b5 (D)

24...h5!

The decisive blow comes from the flank: Black prepares to pry open the h-file and infiltrate White's position.

25 ♜f4 ♜h8

25... ♜g5 at once is a strong alternative.

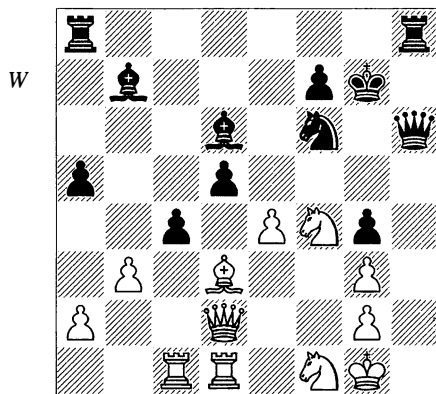
26 ♜e2

Too late for 26 ♜d3 ♜c7 27 ♜xc5!? ♜xc5 28 ♜c1 h4 and Black's attack rolls on.

26...h4 27 ♜f1 ♜d6 28 ♜d3 ♜g5 29 ♜d2 ♜h6 30 e4

Desperation, but Black was threatening to combine opening the h-file with the ...d4 advance to expose the weakness of White's g2-pawn.

30...hgx3 31 fxg3 c4 (D)



32 ♜b1

Black also crashes through after 32 bxc4 ♜c5+ 33 ♜e3 dxe4 34 ♜c2 ♜ad8 35 ♜e2 ♜d3! 36 ♜xd3 exd3 37 ♜xd3 ♜e4 and White must give up his queen to prevent ... ♜h1#.

32...♜ae8 33 ♜e3 ♜c5 0-1

White's king is hopelessly exposed after 34 ♜e1 (34 ♜f1 ♜xe4 35 ♜xe4 ♜f6 is winning for Black) 34... ♜xe4 35 ♜f1 (35 ♜xe4 ♜xe4

attacks the white queen and threatens ...♖h1#) 35...♙xf4+ 36 gxf4 ♖xf4+ 37 ♖f2 (37 ♔e2 ♙xe3 38 ♖xe3 ♙e8 wins the white queen)

37...♙xe3 38 ♖xf4 (38 ♙xe3 ♖h1+ picks up the loose rook) 38...♙xf4 39 ♙cd1 c3 and Black has a decisive material advantage.

Game 20 [D58]

Alexander Onishchuk – Andrei Rychagov

Moscow 2002

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 h6 7 ♙h4 b6 8 ♙e2

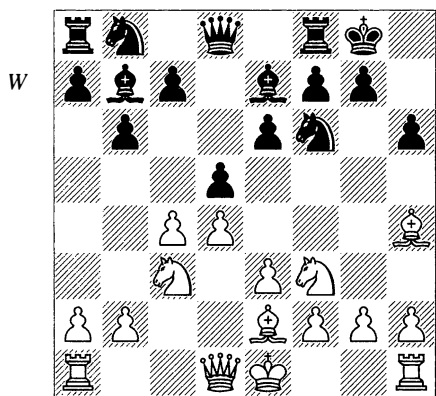
White develops his bishop and prepares kingside castling. Alternatives:

a) 8 ♙d3 and most of White's other 8th move options were covered in Game 19.

b) 8 cxd5 is the subject of Game 21.

8...♙b7 (D)

Rarely seen is 10...♙xd5?! 11 ♘xd5 exd5 (11...♖xd5 12 0-0 ♘d7 13 ♖a4 favours White as the weakness of Black's queenside light squares is exposed) 12 0-0 ♖d6 (Razuvaev-Lutikov, Polanica Zdroj 1972) 13 ♖d2!? ♘d7 14 ♙fd1 c6 15 ♙ac1 with a slight advantage for White as he can target Black's vulnerable c6-pawn.



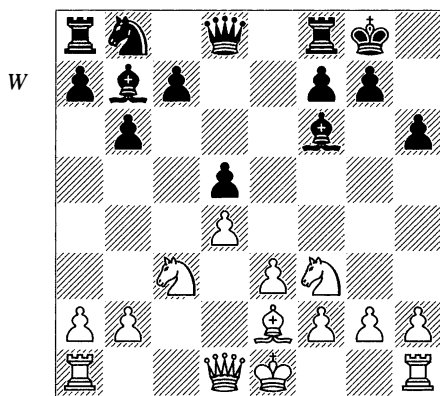
9 ♙xf6

The timing of this exchange in conjunction with White's next move is critical: White exchanges his bishop for the black knight only after Black has played ...♙b7, but before Black has had the opportunity to play ...♘bd7 to recapture with the knight. Less popular options include 9 ♙c1 and 9 0-0, though I shall not be covering these alternatives in this book.

9...♙xf6 10 cxd5

The pawn capture is the only logical follow-up to White's previous move: having conceded the bishop-pair, White must fix the centre pawns before Black plays ...dxc4 to open the long diagonal for his light-squared bishop.

10...exd5 (D)



11 b4

White immediately becomes active on the queenside. There are some independent possibilities after 11 0-0 c5 (11...♘d7 12 b4 c5 13 bxc5 bxc5 14 ♙b1 ♙c6 – 11 b4 c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 ♙b1 ♙c6 14 0-0 ♘d7) 12 dxc5, and now:

a) 12...bxc5 13 ♖b3 ♙c6 14 ♙ad1 c4 (the alternative 14...♙xc3 15 ♖xc3 ♘d7 16 b4 favours White, James-Hulmes, British League (4NCL) 2004/5) 15 ♖c2 ♖a5 16 ♘d4 with an advantage for White thanks to his control over the d4-square, Sashikiran-Lputian, Internet rapid 2004.

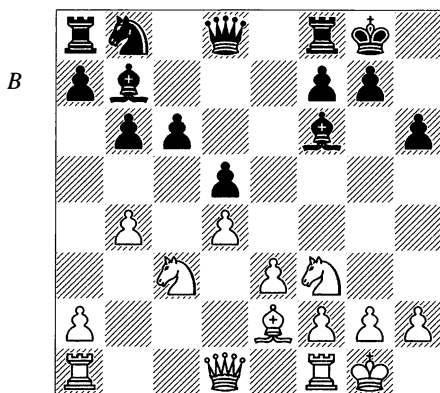
b) 12...♙xc3 13 bxc3 bxc5 14 ♙b1 ♖c7 15 ♘e5 ♘d7 16 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 17 ♖b3 ♙c6 18 ♖a3

♖e7 19 ♙f3 ♜f8 20 ♜f1 with slight pressure for White, although accurate defence enabled Black to hold the draw in Kramnik-Khalifman, Linares 2000.

11...c6

The modest pawn move has become Black's most popular continuation over the past decade or so. The main alternative is 11...c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 ♖b1 ♙c6 (13...♗a5 is a further possibility) 14 0-0 ♘d7 15 ♙b5 ♗c7 with roughly equal chances. This position received a thorough workout during several of the Kasparov-Karpov world championship matches. The game continuation is currently preferred because it gives Black more opportunities for creating imbalance.

12 0-0 (D)



12...a5

Black's most popular alternative is 12...♞e8 13 ♗b3 a5 and here White must choose between undermining Black's pawn-structure or opening lines on the queenside:

a) 14 b5 c5 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♜a1 ♙xc3 17 ♗xc3 ♘d7 with a sharp struggle ahead, Van Wely-Asrian, Turin Olympiad 2006. The strength of White's passed b-pawn is offset by Black's strong central pawn duo.

b) 14 bxa5 ♞xa5 15 a4 ♘d7 16 ♜fe1 ♙a6 (16...g6 17 e4!? c5! with sharp play, Karpov-Short, Amber rapid, Monte Carlo 1993) 17 ♙xa6 ♞xa6 18 ♜ac1 ♞e6 19 e4 dxe4 20 ♞xe4 ♘f8 21 ♘e5 ♞a7 with equal chances, Morović-Lputian, Poikovsky 2001.

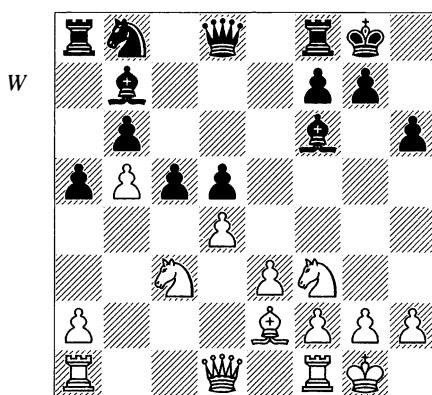
13 b5

This is White's most consistent choice; the pawn advance aims to undermine the support of the d5-pawn. Alternatives:

a) 13 a3 axb4 14 axb4 ♗d6 15 ♞xa8 ♙xa8 16 ♗b3 ♘d7 17 ♜a1 ♙b7 with equal chances, Andersson-Cu.Hansen, match (game 6), Skellefteå 2001.

b) 13 bxa5 ♞xa5 14 a4 ♘d7 15 ♗b3 ♞e8 – 12...♞e8 13 ♗b3 a5 14 bxa5 ♞xa5 15 a4 ♘d7.

13...c5 (D)



14 ♘e5!

Onishchuk's aggressive knight advance was a novelty at the time of this game. One of the ideas is to follow up with ♙f3 to increase the pressure on Black's vulnerable d5-pawn. Other moves allow Black to complete his development more smoothly:

a) 14 ♞e1 (this move fails to put pressure on Black's queenside) 14...♞e8 15 ♜c1 ♘d7 16 g3 ♘f8 with equal chances, Topalov-Kramnik, Linares 1998.

b) 14 ♜c1 ♘d7 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 (Black does not fret over the isolated d5-pawn here because his pieces are active) 16 ♘d4 ♜c8 17 ♙g4 ♜c7 18 ♘a4 (18 ♘ce2 ♙e5 19 g3 g6 was comfortable for Black in Lutz-Van der Sterren, Munich 1994) 18...♘e4 19 ♗d3 ♜c4! with equality, Gretařsson-Yusupov, FIDE Knockout, Groningen 1997.

14...♗c7

Black challenges the e5-knight and indirectly applies pressure to the c3-knight. Alternatives:

a) 14...♘d7? 15 ♘c6 ♙xc6 16 bxc6 cxd4 17 ♘xd5 ♘e5 18 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 19 ♗xd4 ♘xc6

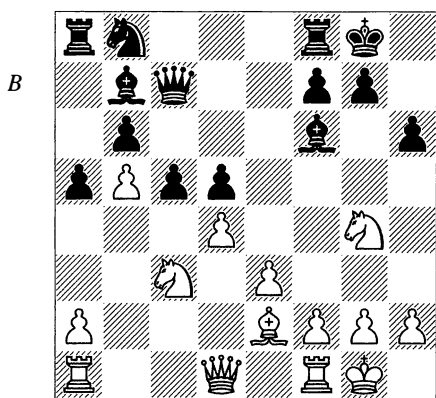
20 ♖xf6 gxf6 21 ♔f3 gives White an endgame advantage, Kipper-A.Shneider, Bad Zwesten 2004.

b) 14...♗d6 15 f4 ♘d7 16 ♖c1 cxd4 17 exd4 favours White because of his strong knight outpost and superior light-squared bishop.

c) 14...♙xe5 15 dxe5 d4 16 exd4 cxd4 17 ♘a4 ♗g5 18 ♙g4! ♗xe5 19 ♘xb6 ♖a7 20 ♖b1 ♗d6 (20...♙e4!? 21 ♖e1 f5 22 ♔f3 with sharp play, Onishchuk-Vaganian, Poikovsky 2002; this game was played two months after our featured game) 21 ♘a4 (the knight is forced off-side as 21 ♘c4?? ♗d5 wins a piece because of the mate threat) 21...♙e4 22 ♖c1 d3 with equal chances, Serradimigni-Salzmänn ICCF corr. 2003.

d) 14...cxd4 15 exd4 ♙xe5 16 dxe5 d4 – 14...♙xe5 15 dxe5 d4 16 exd4 cxd4.

15 ♘g4 (D)



15...♙e7?!

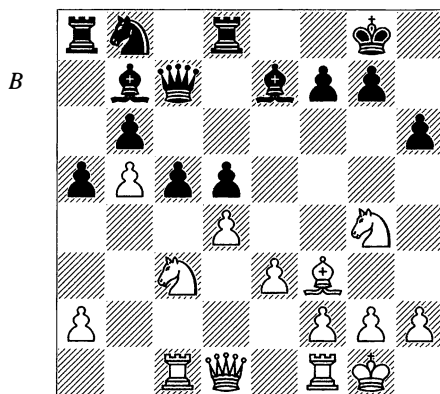
Black retains his dark-squared bishop at the cost of delaying his queenside development. The alternative is 15...♘d7!? 16 ♔f3, and now:

a) 16...cxd4 17 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 18 ♗xd4 (the pawns on b6 and d5 are vulnerable) 18...♗c5 19 ♘a4 (19 ♗d3!? 19...♗xb5 (19...♗xd4 20 exd4 ♘d7 21 ♖fe1 also favours White's more active pieces) 20 ♖ab1 ♗e8 21 ♘xb6 with a clear plus for White, S.Ernst-Lputian, European Clubs Cup, Fügen 2006.

b) 16...♖ad8 17 ♘xd5 ♙xd5 18 ♙xd5 cxd4 19 ♖c1! (19 e4 ♙g5 20 h4 ♙xh4 21 ♖c1 ♘c5 with equal chances, Rahman-Johannessen, Dhaka 2002) 19...♗d6 20 e4 ♘c5 21 f4 d3 22

♖c4 with an advantage for White thanks to his mobile pawn duo.

16 ♔f3 ♖d8 17 ♖c1 (D)



17...c4

Three months after our featured game, Kasimdzhanov tried to improve with 17...♖a7 18 ♘e5 ♗d6 (18...♙f6!?) 19 ♙g4!? (the idea is to prevent Black from completing his development with ...♘d7) 19...♙a8 (White wins material after 19...♙c8? 20 ♙xc8 ♖xc8 21 ♗f3 because of the double attack on the d5- and f7-pawns) 20 ♘a4 ♖c7 21 ♗c2 ♙b7 22 f4 (White's centralized knight dominates the board) 22...c4 23 ♘c3 f6?? (relatively best is 23...♙c8 24 ♙f3 ♙b7 25 ♗f5 with an advantage for White because of his superior development) 24 ♗g6! 1-0 Zviagintsev-Kasimdzhanov, Essen 2002. The finish would be 24...fxe5 (24...♙c8 loses to 25 ♘f7) 25 ♙e6+ ♙h8 26 fxe5 ♗a3 27 ♙f5 followed by mate.

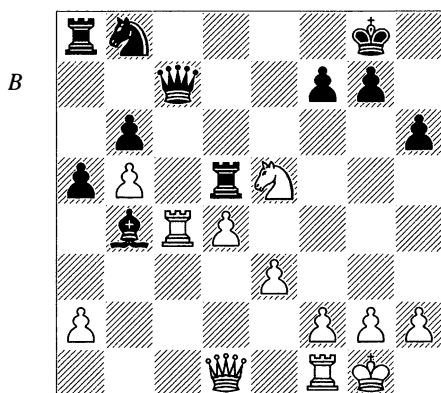
18 ♘e5 ♙b4

18...♙f6 19 ♘d3!? (heading for f4) 19...g5 (Black's position collapses after 19...cxd3 20 ♘xd5 ♗d6 21 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 22 ♙xb7 ♖a7 23 ♔f3 with a decisive material advantage for White) 20 ♘b2 with a clear plus for White according to Onishchuk in *Informator* 84. Black will have difficulty completing his development because of the vulnerable d5- and c4-pawns.

19 ♘xd5!?

Onishchuk plays an enterprising sacrifice. A reasonable alternative is 19 ♙h5 g6 20 ♗g4 ♗e7 21 f4 with strong pressure as Black has no kingside defenders.

19...♙xd5 20 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 21 ♖xc4 (D)

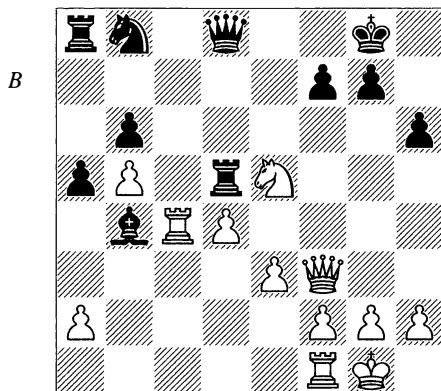


21...♖d8

The alternative is 21...♖b7 22 ♖c2 ♖a7 23 ♖c8+ ♙f8 24 ♖c4 with initiative – Onishchuk. Black is hopelessly bottled up; for example, 24...♖xe5 25 dxe5 ♘d7 26 ♖c6 ♘xe5 (or 26...♖xc6 27 bxc6 ♘xe5 28 c7 and White wins) 27 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 28 ♖d6+ ♙g8 (28...♖e7 29 ♖b8+ ♖e8 30 ♖xa7 is also winning for White) 29 ♖xe5 and White has a solid extra pawn.

22 ♖f3 (D)

White could consider the adventurous sacrifice 22 ♘xf7!? ♙xf7 (22...♖e8 23 ♘e5 ♘d7!?) 23 ♖f3+ ♙g6 (23...♙g8? 24 ♖c8! ♖xc8 25 ♖xd5+ ♙h7 26 ♖e4+ ♙g8 27 ♖xa8 gives White a decisive material advantage) 24 e4!? (24 ♖e4+ ♙f6 25 ♖f3+ ♙g6 26 ♖e4+ with a draw by repetition) 24...♖xb5 25 e5, when White has a dangerous attack because of Black's exposed king and backward development.



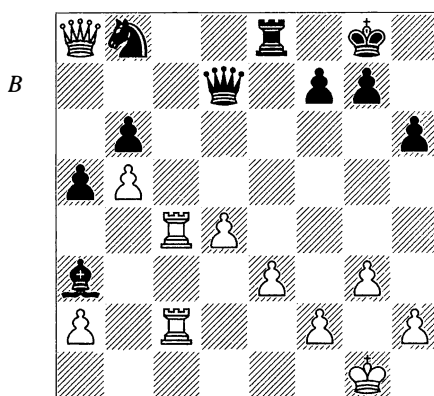
22...♖xe5?

Black must try 22...♖a7 23 ♖fc1 ♙a3 (the alternative 23...♖xe5 24 ♖c8 ♖e8 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 26 a4 favours White, as the queen plus pawns are superior to the three pieces) 24 ♖1c3 ♖xb5 (Black is better according to ECO, but I think White has plenty of attacking resources at his disposal) 25 g3 ♙f8 (the only move to defend the bishop and meet the back-rank threat) 26 ♖c8 ♖d6 27 ♖e8 ♖xe5 (27...♖e7?? loses to 28 ♖xf8+) 28 dxe5 ♖b4 29 ♖cc8 ♘d7 30 ♖d5 and despite the material balance, White has strong pressure because of his active rooks.

23 ♖xa8 ♖e8 24 ♖fc1 ♙a3 25 ♖1c2?!

More accurate is 25 ♖1c3 ♙b4 26 ♖c2 ♖d7 27 a4 with a decisive advantage for White – Onishchuk. Black has no answer to the careful advance of White's centre pawns.

25...♖d7 26 g3 (D)



26...♖xb5?

Relatively best is 26...♖f8 27 ♙g2 ♖xb5 28 ♖b7 ♘d7 29 e4 with a clear plus for White because of his potent pawn duo.

27 ♖c8 ♙d6

The black king is rooted out of his palace after 27...♖f8 28 ♖2c3 (not 28 ♖xb8?? ♖b1+ 29 ♙g2 ♖xc2! and Black wins) 28...♙d6 29 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 30 ♖c8+ ♙e7 31 ♖e4+ ♙f6 32 ♖d8 with crushing threats.

28 ♖b7 ♖xc8 29 ♖xc8+ ♙h7 30 ♖xf7

The black king is hopelessly exposed.

30...♖b1+ 31 ♙g2 ♖e4+ 32 f3 1-0

Black runs out of checks after 32...♖d3 33 e4 ♖e2+ 34 ♙h3 ♖f1+ 35 ♙h4.

Game 21 [D59]

Rustam Kasimdzhanov – Viktor Bologan

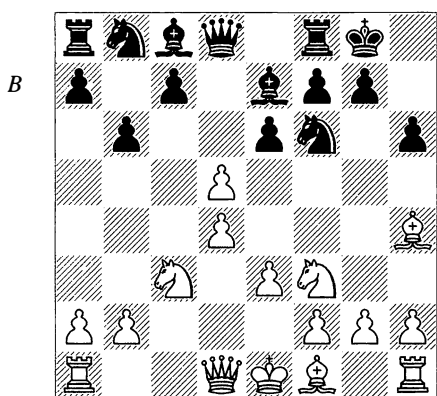
Pamplona 2002

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0
6 ♜f3 h6 7 ♙h4 b6 8 cxd5 (D)

White clarifies the central pawn-structure before committing his light-squared bishop. Alternatives:

a) 8 ♙d3 and most of White's other 8th-move options were covered in Game 19.

b) 8 ♙e2 was covered in Game 20.



8...♜xd5

The knight recapture is favoured by theory because it usually leads to freeing exchanges. Black comes under pressure after 8...exd5 9 ♙d3 ♙b7 10 0-0 c5 11 ♜e5! ♜bd7 (11...♜c6?! 12 ♙a6! ♞c8 13 ♙xb7 ♞xb7 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♜g4 and Black is faced with the unpleasant choice between losing his d5-pawn or having his pawn-structure ruined, Kasparov-Beliavsky, Candidates match (game 1), Moscow 1983) 12 ♙f5! (this was another important Kasparov novelty; the idea is to apply pressure on Black's centre and force a concession) 12...♜xe5 (now White's advanced e-pawn is annoying, but after 12...♞e8, 13 ♞a4!? ratchets up the tension) 13 dxe5 ♜e8 (13...♜e4 14 ♜xd5! ♙xh4 15 ♙xe4 costs Black a pawn; 13...♜h7 14 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 15 f4 ♞ad8 16 ♞f2 also favours White) 14 ♙g3 ♜c7 15 ♞g4 with strong kingside pressure, Kasparov-Beliavsky, Candidates match (game

5), Moscow 1983. This game is annotated by Igor Stohl in *Garry Kasparov's Greatest Chess Games, Volume 1*.

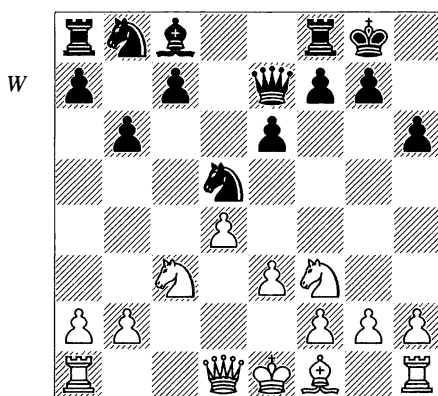
9 ♙xe7

Alternatives:

a) 9 ♙g3 (White avoids exchanges, but this continuation is too slow to cause any problems for Black) 9...c5 10 ♙d3 cxd4 11 exd4 ♙a6!? (Black is able to challenge White's light-squared bishop without having lost a tempo earlier with ...♙c8-b7) 12 0-0 ♙xd3 13 ♞xd3 ♜c6 with equal chances, Levenfish-Capablanca, Moscow 1936.

b) 9 ♜xd5 exd5 (relatively unexplored is 9...♙xh4!? 10 ♜xc7 ♙xf2+ 11 ♙xf2 ♞xc7 12 ♞c1 ♞e7 with sharp play; a recent example is Mamedyarov-Lputian, FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004) 10 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 – 9 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 10 ♜xd5 exd5.

9...♞xe7 (D)

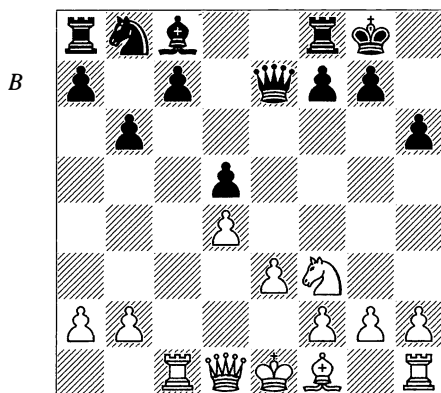


10 ♜xd5

White can delay the exchange of knights with 10 ♞c1 ♙b7 11 ♜xd5 ♙xd5 (11...exd5 – 10 ♜xd5 exd5 11 ♞c1 ♙b7) 12 ♙e2 ♞c8 13 0-0 c5 14 dxc5!? ♞xc5 15 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 16 ♞a4 ♙c6 17 ♞d4 (17 ♞f4 ♜d7 18 b4 ♞f8! 19 ♞c7 ♞c8! with equal chances, Kasparov-Timman, USSR-RoW (game 2), London 1984; this was the stem

game for 14 dxc5!?) 17...♞d7 18 ♖xc5 bxc5! (Bulgarian GM Kiril Georgiev has played at least four games with this move; the optically attractive 18...♞xc5 19 b4 ♞e4 20 ♜c1 ♠d5 21 ♠a6 favours White, Grünberg-A.Petrosian, Polanica Zdroj 1989; several games have confirmed that White's control over the c-file leaves Black struggling to achieve a draw) 19 ♜d1 ♠f8 20 ♞d2 ♠e7 with equal chances, Ftačnik-Ki.Georgiev, match (game 3), Varna 1987. Black's play in this line is very instructive: he voluntarily takes on an isolated c-pawn, but in return his minor pieces control most of the key central squares.

10...exd5 11 ♜c1 (D)



11...♠e6

The central exchanges have left the long diagonal blocked by a black pawn on the d5-square, so Black switches gears and develops his bishop with an eye toward the kingside. This bishop placement is more popular than the older line 11...♠b7 12 ♖a4 c5 13 ♖a3 (this is a well-known manoeuvre in the Tartakower: White exploits the unprotected position of the black queen to increase the pressure on the c5-pawn) 13...♜c8 and then:

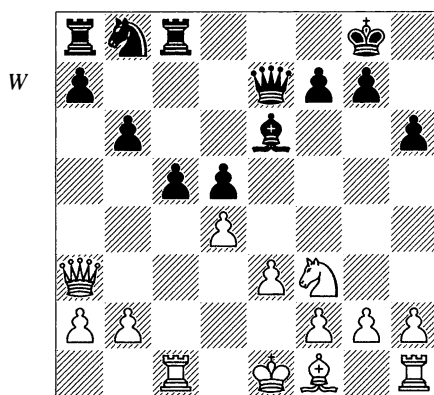
a) 14 ♠e2 ♞d7 15 0-0 ♖f8 16 dxc5 (White creates a set of hanging pawns) 16...bxc5 (this is more dynamic than accepting an isolated pawn by 16...♞xc5 17 ♞d4 with an advantage for White) 17 ♜c2 (17 ♜fd1!?) 17...♖d6! (Black manoeuvres his queen to a more active post) 18 ♜fc1 ♖b6 with equal chances, Petrosian-Spassky, Santa Monica 1966.

b) 14 ♠d3 ♞c6! 15 dxc5 d4 (Black opens the long diagonal for his bishop) 16 0-0 (16 e4 ♞e5 is fine for Black) 16...dxe3 17 fxe3 (thus far this is Gabriel-Bönsch, Augsburg 1993/4) 17...♖xe3+ 18 ♠h1 ♜e8 with equal chances.

12 ♖a4

White develops his queen to an aggressive square. One of the ideas is to inhibit Black from developing his queenside pieces.

12...c5 13 ♖a3 ♜c8 (D)



14 ♠e2

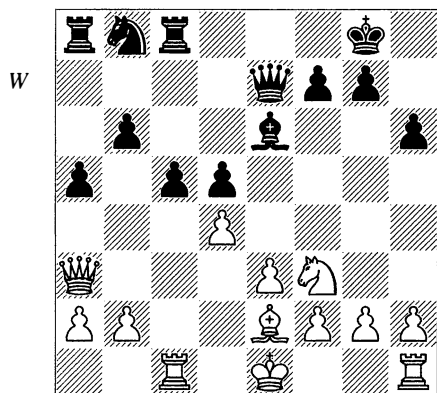
Black seizes the initiative after 14 ♠b5?! ♖b7! (Efim Geller's important improvement over 14...a6?! 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 0-0 ♜a7 17 ♠e2 ♞d7 18 ♞d4 with a slight pull for White in the well-known game Fischer-Spassky, World Ch match (game 6), Reykjavik 1972) 15 dxc5 (15 0-0 c4 enables Black to gain time with ...a6 and ...b5) 15...bxc5 16 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 17 ♖xc5 ♞a6 and now:

a) 18 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 19 ♠xc6 ♜b8! (19...♜c8 20 ♠a4 ♜c1+ 21 ♠d1 defends) 20 0-0 (after 20 b3?? ♜c8 21 ♞d4 ♞b4 Black wins a piece) 20...♠xb2 favours Black because of his active rook, Granberg-Gallmayer, Danish corr. Ch 1976.

b) 18 ♠xa6 ♖xa6 19 ♖a3 ♖c4 20 ♖c3 (White must avoid 20 ♞d2? ♖g4 21 ♠g1 d4! 22 ♞xd4 ♖h4 with a strong attack, Timman-Geller, Hilversum 1973) 20...♜b8! (20...♖xa2 21 0-0 ♜b8 22 b4 ♖a4 23 ♜a1 ♖xb4 24 ♖xb4 ♜xb4 1/2-1/2 Szabo-Kavalek, Amsterdam 1973) 21 ♖xc4 dxc4 22 b3! cxb3 23 axb3 ♜xb3 24 0-0 with a likely draw; for example, 24...♜b2

(24...a5 25 ♖d4) 25 ♖d4 ♙d5 26 ♖a1 a5 27 f3 and White hangs on.

14...a5 (D)



15 dxc5

White can postpone the pawn capture with 15 0-0 ♖a7, and now:

a) 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 ♖fd1 ♖d7 18 ♖e1 ♖b6 is equal, Lubas-Latronico, ICCF corr. 2006.

b) 16 b3 ♖d7 17 ♙b5 ♖c7 18 ♖fd1 ♖ac8 19 h3 ♖f6 20 dxc5 bxc5 21 ♖d2? (21 ♙d3 is safer) 21...♖b6! 22 ♙d3 ♖b4 23 ♖xb4 axb4 with an advantage for Black, Ferreira-Barlow, ICCF e-mail 2001. Black cannot be prevented from creating a powerful passed pawn with ...c4.

15...♖xc5

Another idea is 15...bxc5! (Black avoids an isolated d5-pawn) 16 ♖d4 ♖a6 (16...♖a7 17 ♖xe6 fxe6 18 e4 c4 is unclear according to Kasimdzhanov in his *Informator* 86 notes) 17 ♙xa6 ♖xa6 18 0-0 ♙d7 19 ♖fd1 (White must not abandon the kingside as 19 ♖b3? ♖g6 20 ♖h1 ♖e4 gave Black a strong attack in Mamedyarov-Lputian, FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004) 19...♖d6 with a balanced game.

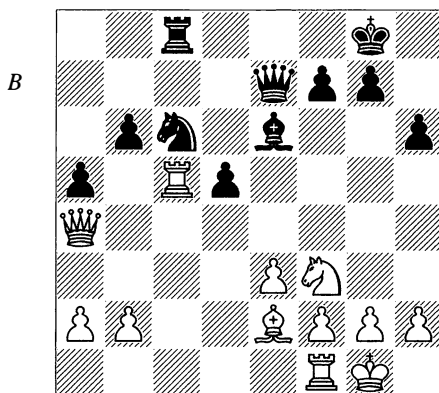
16 0-0 ♖c6

Bologan contests the d4-square. An earlier game continued 16...♖d7 17 ♖d4 ♖f8 18 ♖cd1 ♖b8 19 ♙b5 ♖e5 with equal chances, Kristinsson-Miagmasuren, Skopje Olympiad 1972.

17 ♖a4

Kasimdzhanov prepares to play ♙b5; he would like to exchange his light-squared bishop for the black knight in order to create a good knight versus bad bishop endgame.

17...♖c8 18 ♖xc5 (D)



18...♖xc5

Black could consider the alternative recapture 18...bxc5 19 ♙a6 ♖c7 20 ♙b5 ♖a7 21 ♖xa5 ♖b7 22 ♙d3 (22 a4 ♙g4 with counterplay) 22...♖xb2 23 ♖c1 ♖c6!? (23...c4 24 ♖b1 ♖xb1+ 25 ♙xb1 also leaves White with a small advantage – Kasimdzhanov) 24 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 25 ♖xc5 ♖b4 26 ♙f1 ♖xa2 27 ♖d4 with just a slight advantage for White thanks to his control of the d4-square.

19 ♙b5 ♖a7 20 ♙a6 ♖d8 21 ♖h4 ♖e8

Black could bring his knight back into the game with 21...♖c6!; for example, 22 ♖d4 ♖f8 23 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 (Black is threatening to trap the white bishop with ...b5) 24 ♙d3 (24 a4 ♖c5 also looks safe for Black) 24...d4 (Black eliminates his isolated d-pawn) 25 ♖xd4 ♙xa2 with equal chances – Kasimdzhanov.

22 ♙d3

White has a slight advantage because of his firm control over the d4-square. The next phase of the game is very instructive as Kasimdzhanov increases his advantage.

22...♖c6 23 a3 (D)

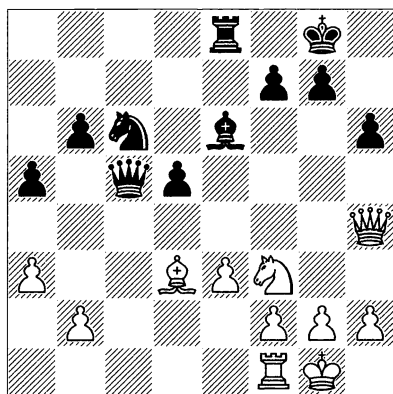
White protects his a-pawn and keeps a black piece out of the b4-square. The guiding principle in such positions is 'do not hurry'; White carefully improves his position to minimize any potential counterplay.

23...b5 24 h3

This is another tidying-up move: White creates *luft* for his king.

24...b4 25 a4 b3?!

B



Black hopes to utilize the b4-square for his pieces, but this pawn advance is too ambitious. Safer is 25...♙d6 26 ♖c1 ♕d7 27 ♖b5 ♖c8 with just a slight advantage for White.

26 ♖b5 ♖c8 27 ♙f4

White improves the position of his queen by switching to the h2-b8 diagonal.

27...♙c2

Alternatives:

a) 27...♙b4 28 ♙xb4 ♖xb4 29 ♖d4 and White picks up the b3-pawn.

b) 27...♕d7 (the idea behind this move is to meet ♕xc6 with ...♕xc6 to attack White's a4-pawn) 28 ♖d1 ♙c2?! 29 ♖xd5 ♕e6 30 ♖d2 and White retains his extra pawn.

28 ♕xc6 ♙xc6 29 ♖d4

White has a classic good knight versus bad bishop advantage. Black's b3-pawn is also hopelessly weak.

29...♙c7

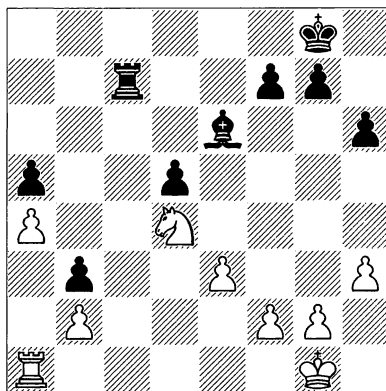
Or 29...♙b6 30 ♙e5 followed by the same ♖a1-a3 manoeuvre as in the game. Black's light-squared bishop is just a passive observer.

30 ♙xc7 ♖xc7 31 ♖a1! (D)

Black's b3-pawn is doomed, so White positions his rook behind the a4-pawn to avoid giving Black any ray of hope. Less precise is 31 ♖xb3?! ♖b7 32 ♖xa5 ♖xb2 33 ♖a1 ♕d7 (compare this line to the game position after Black's

33rd move) 34 ♖d1 ♕xa4 35 ♖xd5 with an advantage for White in the pawn-ahead endgame.

B



31...♙f8?!

Relatively best is 31...♖b7 32 ♖a3 ♖b4! and now the main line of Kasimdzhanov's analysis is 33 ♖xb3 d4 (the best chance: Black liquidates his weak d-pawn) 34 ♖xd4 ♖xb2 35 ♖xe6 (White simplifies into a superior rook endgame) 35...fxe6 36 ♖d3 ♖b4 37 ♖d4 e5 38 ♖d5 ♖xa4 39 ♖xe5 with a clear advantage for White.

32 ♖xb3 ♖b7 33 ♖xa5 ♖xb2 34 ♖c6

White's position compares favourably to the line arising in the note to Black's 33rd move – there Black had a bishop on d7, so White was unable to redeploy his knight.

34...♕d7 35 ♖d4 ♙e7 36 a5 ♙d6 37 g4 ♙c7

White infiltrates on the kingside after 37...h5 38 a6 ♖b8 39 a7 ♖a8 40 gxh5 ♕xh3 41 f3 ♙c7 42 ♙f2 ♙b7 43 ♖g1 and White wins – Kasimdzhanov.

38 ♖c1+ ♙d6 39 ♖a1 ♙c7 40 ♙g2 ♙b7 41 ♖c1 1-0

White's king will make a decisive entrance into the game after 41...♖a2 42 ♖c5 ♕e6 43 ♙g3. Kasimdzhanov displayed great patience in this game.

8 Classical Defence

Introduction

The Classical Defence arises after the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 ♘bd7; Black adopts a flexible wait-and-see approach and lends support to his f6-knight. The liberation of Black's light-squared bishop is an important factor in the evaluation of many critical lines: White tries to keep the prelate buried on the c8-square, whereas Black's goal is to free his position by a timely ...e5 or ...c5 pawn-break. The Classical Defence was the battleground for many games between the old masters during the early decades of the 20th century, but its use among leading players declined as interest turned toward the more flexible Tartakower Defence. Today some of the older Classical lines have been revived with a modern interpretation: White has been experimenting with the dangerous Rubinstein Variation 7 ♙c2 (Game 22), and Black has been investigating options such as 7 ♙c1 a6 (Game 23) or even 7 ♙c1 dxc4 (note 'c' to Black's 7th move in Game 23).

The Games

Game 22 (Jobava-Andersson) is a Classical Defence featuring 7 ♙c2, an idea first popularized by Rubinstein. Andersson reacts with the theoretically approved recommendation 7...c5 8 ♙d1 ♙a5 and soon both sets of c- and d-pawns are exchanged. Jobava triples along the open d-file and appears to be making progress, but Andersson's play is very instructive as he carefully neutralizes the pressure and exchanges White's active pieces. Most of the action is in the game notes, but the lesson here is that careful defence is required to defend a slightly inferior position.

In **Game 23** (Topalov-P.H.Nielsen), Black meets the traditional 7 ♙c1 with the ambitious 7...a6, aiming for queenside expansion. White responds with 8 c5, blocking the queenside, and several moves later Black breaks open the centre with ...e5 to free his light-squared bishop. Topalov obtains some pressure thanks to his more active pieces, but Nielsen carefully neutralizes White's initiative and the end result is a well-played draw.

Game 24 (Atalik-Zheliandinov) features the line 7 ♙c1 c6 8 ♙d3 dxc4 9 ♙xc4 ♘d5. Black's play here is known as 'Capablanca's equalizing manoeuvre'. Although the great Cuban World Champion did not invent this idea, his influence on opening fashion was instrumental in popularizing the line. The game proceeds with 10 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 and here Atalik plays 11 ♘e4. Both players follow the theoretical recommendation for many moves until Atalik unleashes the novelty 19 f4!. Zheliandinov's position immediately becomes critical and he is unable to save the game. Atalik's improvement forced a re-examination of this particular line and Black has been compelled to vary his play earlier. This game is further evidence that there are always new ideas to be found, even in the most heavily-analysed opening lines.

In **Game 25** (Lesiège-Voskanian), White varies from Game 24 with 11 0-0 ♘xc3 12 ♙xc3 e5 13 ♙b3. This is a dangerous attacking idea and several moves later Lesiège plays the most challenging

follow-up 16 ♖e5!. Both sides go astray in the resulting complications, but Lesiège recovers to play a devastating rook sacrifice. Voskanian gives up in view of an inevitable heavy loss of material. This line is a good example of the power of active pieces: White has a mobile rook on the third rank and it is enough to cause Black great distress.

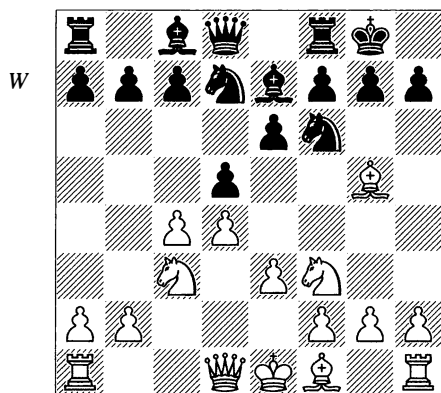
Game 22 [D61]

Baatur Jobava – Ulf Andersson

European Ch, Antalya 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0
6 ♘f3 ♘bd7 (D)

The alternative 6...h6 was covered in Games 18-21.



7 ♖c2

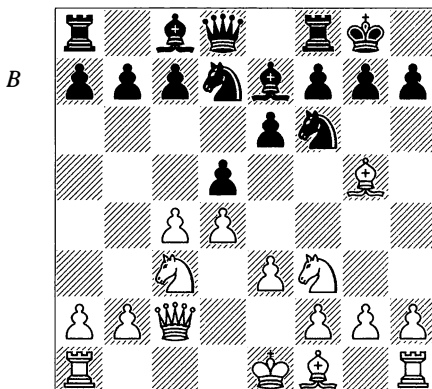
In this line, known as the Rubinstein Variation, White vacates the d-file and retains the option of castling queenside. Alternatives:

a) 7 ♘d3 dxc4 (now that White has moved his light-squared bishop, Black captures the c-pawn to pick up a tempo) 8 ♙xc4 c5 9 0-0 a6 10 a4 (White prevents Black from expanding on the queenside as 10 ♖e2 b5 11 ♙b3 ♙b7 12 ♙fd1 ♖b6 gives Black a comfortable game, Marshall-P.Johner, Carlsbad 1907) 10...cxd4 11 exd4 ♘b6 12 ♙b3 ♙d7 13 a5 (13 ♘e5 ♙c6 14 ♙e1 ♘bd5 with a comfortable position for Black thanks to his control of the b4- and d5-squares, Korchnoi-Lutikov, Moscow 1961, and many subsequent games) 13...♘bd5 14 ♙xd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘xd5 exd5 16 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 17 ♖b3 ♙b5 18 ♙fe1 ♖d6 with equal chances, Puc-Trifunović, Yugoslav Ch, Ljubljana 1951.

b) 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♘d3 c6 9 ♖c2 ♙e8 transposes to the Exchange Variation; this position is the subject of Game 7.

c) 7 ♙c1 is discussed in Games 23-25.

We now return to 7 ♖c2 (D):



7...c5

Black fights for a full share of the centre; this is the most popular choice here. Alternatives:

a) 7...a6 8 cxd5 exd5 (this is another form of the Exchange Variation in which Black has played ...a6 instead of ...c6) 9 0-0-0!? (also possible is the more conservative 9 ♘d3) 9...♙e8 10 ♘e5 ♘f8 11 ♙b1 with double-edged play, Milos-Gomez Baillo, Buenos Aires 1990.

b) 7...b6 8 cxd5 exd5 (in the event of 8...♘xd5? 9 ♘xd5 exd5 10 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 11 ♖xc7 White wins a pawn) 9 ♘d3 h6 10 ♙h4 ♙b7 (the opening has transposed into a line of the Tartakower Defence; White has an advantage because the board is full of pieces and Black's light-squared bishop is on a closed diagonal) 11 0-0 c5 12 ♙ad1 ♙c8 13 dxc5 ♙xc5 14 ♖b1 with an advantage for White because of his

control over the d4-square, Kasparov-T.Georgadze, USSR Ch, Tbilisi 1978.

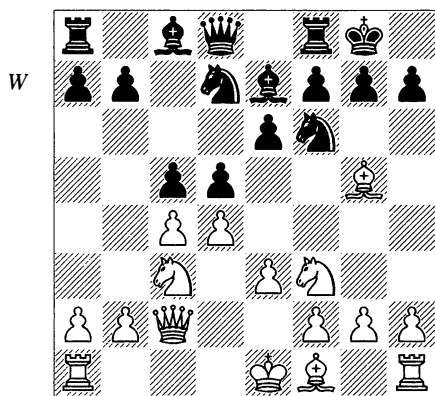
c) 7...c6 8 ♖d1 a6 9 a3 b5 10 c5 and then:

c1) 10...e5 11 dxe5 ♜e8 (11...♜g4 12 ♙f4 ♜xc5 13 h3 ♜h6 14 e4 favours White because of the pin along the d-file) 12 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 (S.Ivanov-Lugovoi, St Petersburg Ch 1997) 13 ♙d3! h6 14 e4! ♜xe5 15 ♜xe5 ♞xe5 16 0-0 with a development advantage for White.

c2) 10...a5 11 b4 ♜h5 12 ♙xe7 (12 ♙f4 f5 was fine for Black in Shalamberidze-T.L.Petrosian, Batumi 2001) 12...♞xe7 13 ♙d3 f5 14 0-0 with just a slight advantage for White because of his more active bishop.

c3) 10...♜h5 11 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 12 ♙e2 ♜hf6 13 0-0 (13 e4!?) 13...e5 14 dxe5 ♜xe5 with equal chances, V.Popov-Lugovoi, St Petersburg blitz Ch 2000.

We now return to 7...c5 (D):



8 ♙d1

Alternatives:

a) 8 0-0-0 is the sharpest try, but Black can quickly generate pressure on White's king:

a1) 8...♞a5 9 ♖b1 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 cxd4 11 ♙xd4!? (this bold recapture is more consistent with queenside castling than the passive line 11 exd4 b5!? 12 ♙xb5 ♞b8 13 ♙d3 ♙a3 14 ♙c1 ♙b4 {14...♙a6!? also gives Black reasonable compensation for the pawn} 15 ♖a1 ♙b7 with sharp play, Timoshchenko-Ruban, Norilsk 1987) 11...h6 12 h4!? ♜b6 (12...e5? was tried in R.Hernandez-Y.Gonzalez, Santa Clara 2003, but now White should exploit his development advantage by means of 13 ♙d5!!; for example,

13...♜xd5 14 ♜xd5 ♙c5 15 ♙e7 with a crushing attack) 13 ♙b3 ♙d7 (Birnbaum-Schranz, corr. 1986) 14 ♞d2 ♙f8 15 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 (White's obnoxious rook is well-placed after 15...♞f5+?? 16 ♙c2 ♞xf6 17 ♙f4, when White wins material) 16 ♜d5 ♞xd2 17 ♜xf6+ gxf6 18 ♙xd2 ♙c6 with an equal endgame.

a2) 8...b6!? (this logical move has been played in only a handful of high-level games; Black bolsters the queenside and prepares to develop his light-squared bishop) 9 cxd5 (9 ♖b1!? is another idea to vacate the dangerous c-file) 9...♜xd5 10 ♙xe7 (White's best chance may be the sharp 10 h4!? ♙b7 11 ♜xd5 ♙xd5 12 ♙a6!? with approximately equal chances) 10...♞xe7 11 ♜xd5 exd5 12 dxc5 (12 ♙d3 ♜f6 13 ♖b1 1/2-1/2 Bagirov-Balashov, Jurmala 1985; Black should now launch a queenside pawn-storm by 13...c4! 14 ♙f5 b5 with a clear plus as White's king is on the wrong side of the board) 12...♜xc5 13 ♖b1 ♙d7 with a promising position for Black because of White's vulnerable king, Orsag-Bellini, Montecatini Terme 1997.

b) 8 cxd5 (this is White's most popular choice) 8...♜xd5 (Black recaptures with the knight to stimulate piece exchanges which will help to free his position) 9 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 10 ♜xd5 exd5 11 ♙d3 (11 dxc5 ♜xc5 12 ♙e2 ♙g4 13 0-0 ♞ac8 14 ♞ac1 ♞f6! with equality, Lilienthal-Lasker, Moscow 1936) 11...g6 (Black places a pawn on the same colour square as his bishop, but it is more important to keep the white knight out of f5) 12 dxc5 ♜xc5 13 0-0 ♙g4 14 ♜d4 ♞ac8 15 ♞ac1 ♞g5 16 ♙e2 ♜e4 17 ♞d3 ♙xe2 18 ♞xe2 a6 with equal chances, Savchenko-Moroz, Enakievo 1997.

We return to 8 ♙d1 (D):

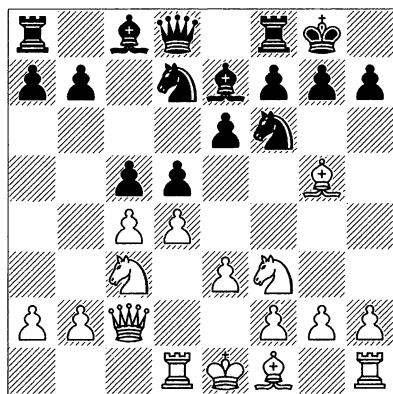
8...♞a5

Alternatives:

a) 8...h6? 9 cxd5! hxg5 (9...cxd4 10 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 {Gustavsson-Grigoriev, ICCF corr. 1991} 11 ♜xd4 and White wins a pawn) 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 ♜xg5 ♞a5 (11...♞b6 12 ♙c4 ♜b8 13 0-0 favours White, Brzoza-Gaida, corr. 1987) 12 ♜xe6 ♞f7 13 h4 and White has three pawns and a dangerous attack in return for the piece.

b) 8...cxd4 9 ♜xd4 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 ♞a5 11 ♙h4 ♜e5 and now White must decide where to post his bishop:

B

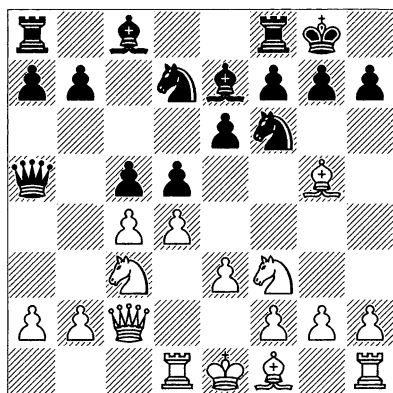


b1) 12 ♖b3 ♜g6 13 ♙g3 ♜h5 (Black is able to exchange White's active bishop) 14 0-0 ♜xg3 15 hxg3 ♙d7 16 ♜f5 ♙c6 17 ♜xe7+ 1/2-1/2 Buhmann-A.Sokolov, French Team Ch, Asnieres sur Seine 2006.

b2) 12 ♙e2 (the idea behind this retreat is to retain some influence over the g4- and h5-squares) 12...♜g6 13 ♙g3 e5 14 ♜b3 ♜b6 15 0-0 ♙e6 with equality, Cu.Hansen-Kveinys, Groningen 1990.

We now return to the position after 8...♜a5 (D):

W



9 cxd5

This natural pawn capture is White's most challenging continuation. Alternatives:

a) 9 ♙d3 h6 10 ♙h4 and then:

a1) 10...cxd4 11 exd4 dxc4 12 ♙xc4 ♜b6 13 ♙b3 ♙d7 (another idea is 13...♜a6!? to inhibit White from castling) 14 0-0 ♜ac8 with equal chances, Lasker-Capablanca, World Ch

match (game 10), Havana 1921. Capablanca went on to win an instructive endgame.

a2) 10...dxc4 11 ♙xc4 ♜b6 12 ♙e2 (12 ♙b3?? c4 13 ♙a4 ♙b4 and Black wins a piece) 12...♙d7 13 0-0 ♜ac8 with a balanced position, Bagirov-Ubilava, Tashkent 1984.

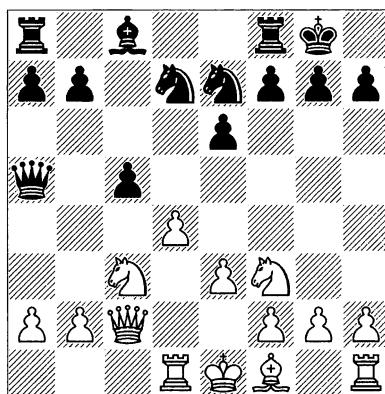
b) 9 ♜d2 (White breaks the pin on the c3-knight, but the knight manoeuvre is quite cumbersome) 9...cxd4 10 ♜b3 ♜b6 11 ♜xd4 (Black secures the bishop-pair after 11 ♜xd4 dxc4 12 ♙xc4 ♜c5! 13 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 with a comfortable game) 11...h6 12 ♙h4 e5 13 ♜d1 dxc4 14 ♙xc4 (Ribli-Prandstetter, Warsaw Zonal 1979) 14...♜c6! 15 ♙f1 (15 ♙d3? ♜xg2 16 ♙d2 ♜h3 is crushing for Black) 15...♜b6 16 ♙g3 ♙d6 with equal chances.

9...♜xd5

Black obtains an inferior version of the Ragozin Defence after 9...exd5 10 ♙d3 h6 (10...c4? loses a pawn to 11 ♙xh7+!) 11 ♙h4 c4 (11...cxd4 {S.Pedersen-Lyrberg, Lyngby 1991} 12 ♜xd4 ♜c5 13 0-0 ♜xd3 14 ♜xd3 leaves White better thanks to his control over the d4-square) 12 ♙f5 ♜e8 13 0-0 ♙b4 14 ♜d2 with an advantage for White, Juan Roldan-Acebal Muniz, Asturias Team Ch 1994. In comparison to the position after White's 12th move in Game 11, White has played the useful extra move ♜d1. Also, the inclusion of the moves ...h6 and ♙h4 benefits White because Black cannot drive the light-squared bishop away with ...g6 due to the crushing ♙xg6.

10 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 (D)

W



11 ♙d3

White can also keep the d-file clear by selecting a more conservative development of his light-squared bishop with 11 ♘e2 ♟f6 (11... cxd4 12 ♞xd4 ♟f6 13 0-0 ♙d7 14 ♞fd1 gives White strong pressure along the d-file, Jobava-Sulskis, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005) 12 0-0 ♙d7 13 ♟e5 and then:

a) 13... cxd4 14 ♟xd7 ♟xd7 15 ♞xd4 ♟f6 16 ♙f3 with an advantage for White thanks to his active bishop, Jobava-Bruzon, Havana 2005.

b) 13... ♞fd8 14 ♟xd7 ♞xd7 15 dxc5 ♞xc5 16 ♞xd7 ♟xd7 17 ♞d1 ♟f6 18 ♙f3 with a slight advantage for White, Azmaiparashvili-Tregubov, European Ch, Saint Vincent 2000.

11... ♟f6

Black loses time and weakens the f6-square after the unnecessary 11...g6? 12 0-0 cxd4 13 ♟xd4 ♟f6 14 ♟e4 with a central initiative for White, D.Gurevich-B.Kogan, Reykjavik 1982.

12 0-0 cxd4 13 ♟xd4

Black can quickly complete his development after 13 exd4 ♙d7 14 ♟e5 ♙c6 15 ♞fe1 ♞ad8 with equal chances, Hillarp Persson-Andersson, Malmö 2000. Black has a comfortable position here thanks to his firm control of the d5-square; Andersson went on to win an instructive rook endgame.

13...h6 (D)

Black relieves his knight from having to defend the h-pawn. Alternatives:

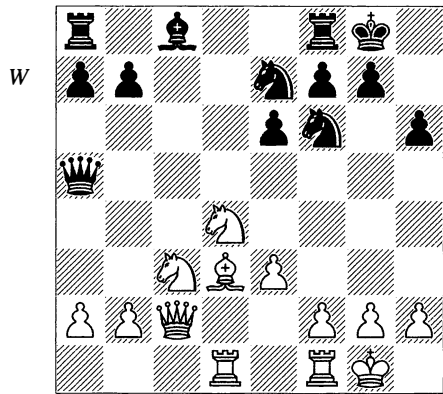
a) 13...g6? – 11...g6? 12 0-0 cxd4 13 ♟xd4 ♟f6 .

b) 13...e5 14 ♟b3 ♞b4 15 a3!? (15 ♟e4 {Lutikov-Klovans, Riga 1954} 15... ♟xe4 16 ♙xe4 f5 with equal chances) 15... ♞h4 16 ♟c5 b6 17 ♟5e4 ♟xe4 18 ♙xe4 ♞b8 19 ♞a4 with an advantage for White as Black's queenside pawns are vulnerable.

14 ♙e2

White prepares to redeploy his bishop along the h1-a8 diagonal. Another idea is 14 ♟e4 ♟ed5 15 a3, and now:

a) 15... ♙d7 16 ♞c5 !? (16 ♟b3 ♞b6 17 ♟bc5 ♙c6 18 b4 ♟xe4 19 ♙xe4 ♟f6 20 ♙xc6 1/2-1/2 Lautier-Andersson, French Team Ch 1999/00) 16... ♞xc5 17 ♟xc5 ♞ac8 18 b4 ♟c7 19 g3 with a slight advantage for White according to Tregubov, but I think Black should then play 19...e5!? 20 ♟xd7 (20 ♟f5 ♞d8 is fine for



Black as he has completed his development) 20... ♞xd7 21 ♟b3 ♞c7 with equal chances.

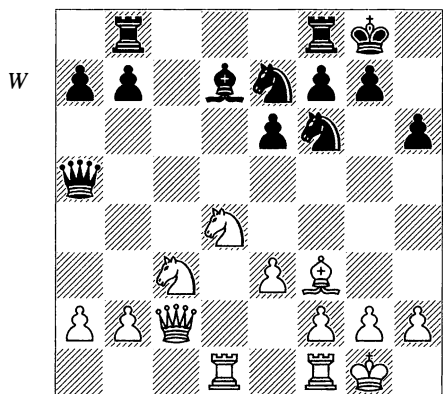
b) 15... ♟xe4 !? 16 ♙xe4 ♟f6 17 ♙f3 ♞b8 18 ♞c1 ♙d7 is also equal, S.Ivanov-Tregubov, Russian Ch, Samara 2000.

14... ♙d7 15 ♙f3 ♞ab8 (D)

Vladimirov has had some satisfactory experiences with 15...e5 16 ♟b3 ♞c7 :

a) 17 ♞d2 ♙f5 18 ♞d1 ♞ad8 was fine for Black in Bellon-Vladimirov, Spanish Team Ch, Logroño 1991.

b) 17 ♞d2 ♞fd8 18 ♞d6 ♞xd6 19 ♞xd6 ♙c6 with an equal endgame, Arkell-Vladimirov, Ostend 1990.



16 ♞d3

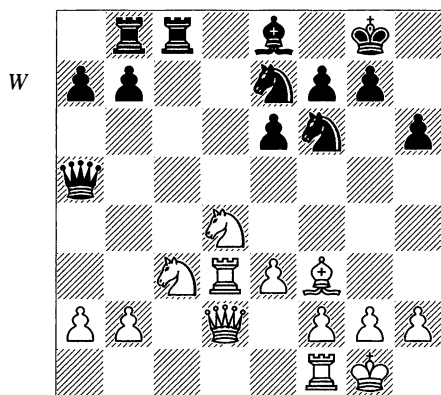
Jobava prepares to double rooks along the d-file. Alternatives:

a) 16 ♞b3 b5 (Black is threatening to drive the knight away with ...b4 followed by ... ♙a4 , winning material) 17 ♟e4 ♟xe4 18 ♙xe4 e5 19

♟c2 ♖e6 20 ♜b4 (so far this is the game Bogoljubow-Reinhardt, Berlin 1937) 20... ♜xb4 21 ♟xb4 f5 with a comfortable position for Black.

b) 16 ♜d2 (White is threatening to disrupt Black's pawn-structure with ♟d5) 16... ♜b6 17 ♟b3 ♖c6 (Black seeks to exchange White's most active piece) 18 ♜d4 ♜xd4 19 ♟xd4 ♖xf3 20 ♟xf3 ♜fd8 1/2-1/2 Guimard-Bolbochan, Mar del Plata 1950.

16... ♜fc8 17 ♜d2 ♖e8 (D)



18 ♜d1

White can also try 18 ♟d5!? ♜xd2, and then:

a) 19 ♟xf6+ gxf6 20 ♜xd2 f5 21 ♜fd1 ♟g7 with equal chances.

b) 19 ♟xe7+ ♟f8 20 ♟g6+ (20 ♜xd2 ♟xe7 is level) 20... fxcg6 21 ♜xd2 e5 22 ♟b3 ♖f7 with equality.

18... ♜b6 19 h3 a6

The idea behind this move is to keep a white knight out of the b5-square.

20 ♟e4

White's pieces are more actively deployed so he would typically not be seeking to exchange pieces, but here the natural 20 e4 is met by 20... ♟g6 21 ♟b3 ♟e5, occupying a comfortable post on the e5-square.

20... ♟xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♜a7 22 ♜b4

Another possibility is 22 f4!? to drum up some activity on the kingside.

22... ♜c5

Black seeks to exchange White's most active piece.

23 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 24 ♟b3 ♜cc8 25 ♜d6

White's position looks attractive thanks to his control of the d-file, but it is difficult to make progress as Black has no weaknesses.

25... ♖c6

Andersson neutralizes Jobava's more active bishop.

26 ♖xc6 ♟xc6 27 ♟c5 ♟e5 28 b4 a5!

Black moves the pawn out of range of the white knight in preparation for ...b6.

29 a3 b6 30 ♟d7 1/2-1/2

A drawn rook endgame arises after 30... ♟xd7 31 ♜xd7 axb4 32 axb4 ♜c4 33 ♜1d4 ♜bc8.

Game 23 [D63]

Veselin Topalov – Peter Heine Nielsen

Dortmund 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♟c3 ♟f6 4 ♖g5 ♖e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♟f3 ♟bd7 7 ♜c1 (D)

The rook move is the most popular choice here: White develops a piece and occupies the potentially open c-file.

7 ♜c2 was covered in Game 22.

7... a6

The idea behind this modest-looking but ambitious pawn move is to expand on the queenside with ...dxc4 followed by ...b5; Black would then follow up with ...♖b7 and ...c5 to free his

position. Black is hoping to save a tempo by playing ...c5 in one move, and White must decide whether to allow Black to implement this plan.

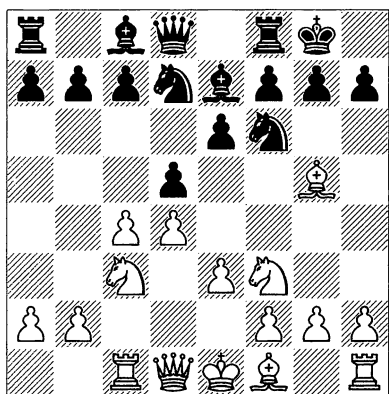
Black has several important alternatives:

a) 7...c6 is the main line of the Classical Defence, and the subject of Games 24 and 25.

b) After 7... ♟e4? 8 ♖xe7 ♜xe7 9 cxd5 ♟xc3 10 ♜xc3 exd5 11 ♜xc7 White wins a pawn.

c) 7...h6 8 ♖xf6 ♟xf6 9 c5 c6 10 ♖d3 ♟d7 11 b4 f5 12 0-0 ♜c7 13 b5 e5 14 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 15

B



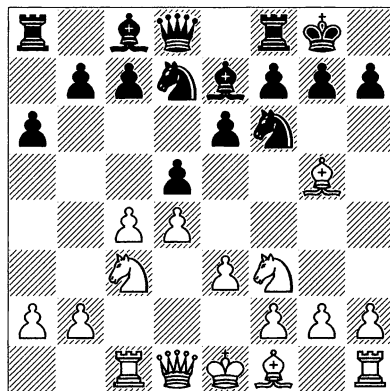
dx e5 ♖xe5 16 ♖a4 with just a slight advantage for White, Gelfand-Kharitonov, Sverdlovsk 1987.

d) 7...b6 (Black plays a form of the Tartakower Defence with his knight already committed to the d7-square) 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♖a4 c5 10 ♠a6 h6!? 11 ♠h4 (11 ♠f4!? is interesting but untested; 11 ♠xf6 ♜xf6 12 0-0 ♠xa6 13 ♖xa6 ♖c8 14 ♖d3 ♖e6 is satisfactory for Black) 11...cxd4 12 exd4 ♜h5! 13 ♠g3 ♠xa6 14 ♖xa6 ♠g5 with equal chances, Gelfand-Short, Candidates match (game 2), Brussels 1991.

e) 7...dxc4 (this is the move 7 ♜c1 was supposed to prevent, but matters are not so clear) 8 ♠xc4 a6 9 a4 c5 10 0-0 (10 dxc5 ♜xc5 11 ♖xd8 ♠xd8 is equal) 10...cxd4 11 exd4 (11 ♜xd4 ♖a5 12 ♠h4 ♜e5 13 ♠e2 ♜g6 14 ♠g3 e5 with equal chances as Black has freed his light-squared bishop, Berkes-P.Acs, Paks 2005) 11...♜b6 12 ♠b3 ♠d7 13 ♜e1 ♠c6 14 ♜e5 ♜bd5 15 ♖d3 (15 ♜xc6 bxc6 is fine for Black as he will be able to utilize the open b-file) 15...♜b4 16 ♖h3 ♜fd5 17 ♠d2 ♠g5 (a useful manoeuvre to reduce White's attacking firepower) 18 ♠xg5 ♖xg5 19 ♜e4 ♖e7 20 ♖g3 with roughly equal chances in I.Sokolov-Tregubov, Selfoss 2002, and several subsequent games. This is a typical IQP position: White has some attacking chances on the kingside, but Black's set-up is solid and he has a firm grip on b4 and d5. Genna Sosonko's article on this variation in *NIC Yearbook 66* shows that Black's chances should not be underestimated in this line.

We now return to the position after 7...a6 (D):

W



8 c5

This is White's most principled response: he immediately establishes a space advantage on the queenside. Alternatives:

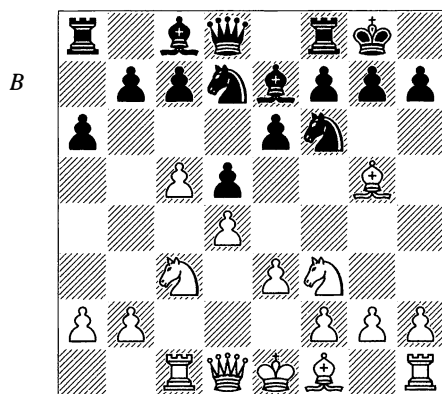
a) 8 ♠d3 (the mechanical bishop move concedes a tempo and allows Black to implement his plan) 8...dxc4 9 ♠xc4 b5 10 ♠b3 ♠b7 11 0-0 c5 (Black has already managed to liberate his queenside pieces) 12 ♖e2 cxd4 13 exd4 ♜b6 14 ♜fd1 ♜c8 with a comfortable position for Black, Tunik-Kharitonov, Podolsk 1992.

b) 8 a4 (White prevents Black's plan of expanding on the queenside at the cost of creating a hole on the b4-square) 8...c6 (8...dxc4 9 ♠xc4 – 7...dxc4 8 ♠xc4 a6 9 a4) 9 ♠d3 dxc4 10 ♠xc4 ♜d5 11 ♠xe7 ♖xe7 12 0-0 (this position without the moves ...a6 and a4 is the subject of Game 25) 12...♜xc3 13 ♜xc3 e5 14 dxe5 ♜xe5 15 ♜xe5 ♖xe5 16 f4 ♖e4 (16...♖a5 17 ♖c2 with a slight advantage for White, F.Olafsson-Najdorf, Reykjavik 1976) 17 a5! favours White because of Black's vulnerable b7-pawn. This line should be compared to Game 25.

c) 8 a3 (White makes a useful waiting move in anticipation of Black playing ...dxc4) 8...h6 9 ♠h4 dxc4 10 ♠xc4 b5! (10...c5 11 ♠e2! cxd4 12 ♜xd4 ♜b6 13 ♠g3 favours White because of his more active pieces, Capablanca-Alekhine, World Ch match (game 19), Buenos Aires 1927) 11 ♠e2 ♠b7 12 0-0 c5 13 dxc5 ♜xc5 14 ♜d4 ♜c8 with equal chances, Capablanca-Alekhine, World Ch match (game 21), Buenos Aires 1927.

d) 8 cxd5!? (White transposes into a form of the Exchange Variation) 8...exd5 (Black must avoid 8...Qxd5? 9 Qxd5 exd5 10 Qxe7 Qxe7 11 Qxc7, when White has won a pawn) 9 Qd3 c6 10 0-0 Qe8 11 Qc2 Qf8 brings us to a similar position to the Exchange Variation discussed in Game 7. Here White has a rook on c1 while Black has a pawn on a6. This difference would save a tempo for Black if White were to switch gears and pursue a minority attack with Qb1 and b4, but instead White often plays Qa4-c5 to exploit the weakness of the c5- and b6-squares. While I shall not be examining this line in detail, I would like to point out that this position has been reached more than 350 times in practice, and experience has shown that the chances are roughly balanced.

We now return to 8 c5 (D):



8...c6

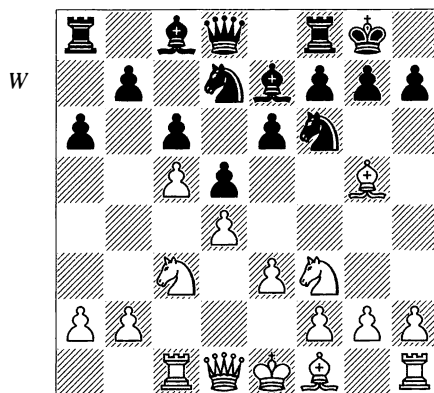
Black bolsters the d5-pawn in preparation for the freeing ...e5 pawn-break. Alternatives:

a) 8...b6? (this move is too risky for Black) 9 c6! (9 cxb6? c5 10 Qe2 Qxb6 with equality, Sashikiran-Berkes, Paks 2005) 9...Qb8 10 Qa4 Qe8 (E.Popov-Chubakov, Tomsk 2003) 11 Qxe7 Qxe7 12 b4 with a tremendous advantage for White because of Black's buried queenside pieces.

b) 8...Qe4 (now that White has blocked the queenside, Black seeks exchanges as in the Lasker Defence) 9 Qxe4 dxe4 10 Qxe7 Qxe7 11 Qd2 Qf6 12 Qc4 Qd7 13 Qe2 Qc6 14 0-0 Qd5 15 Qc2 Qxc4 16 Qxc4 e5 17 dxe5 Qxe5 18 h3 with just a slight advantage for White,

Nikolić-Doettling, Bundesliga 2001/2. The open position favours the bishop over the knight.

We now return to 8...c6 (D):



9 Qd3

White seizes an important diagonal and prepares to castle. Alternatives:

a) 9 Qe2 e5 (this liberating pawn-break is very important for Black because it opens a diagonal for his light-squared bishop) 10 0-0 h6 11 Qh4 exd4 12 exd4 g5 13 Qg3 Qh5 14 Qd3 Qxg3 15 fxg3!? Qf6 with a balanced game, I.Farago-Portisch, Hungarian Team Ch 1995/6. Black has a powerful dark-squared bishop to make up for his compromised kingside pawn-structure.

b) 9 b4 (White reinforces his c5-pawn to inhibit the ...e5 pawn-break) 9...Qh5!? (Black exchanges dark-squared bishops, but in return he is able to enforce the ...e5 pawn-break) 10 Qxe7 Qxe7 11 Qd3 Qhf6 12 0-0 e5 13 dxe5 Qxe5 14 Qd4 Qe8 with equal chances, Tunik-Kharitonov, Voskresensk 1993.

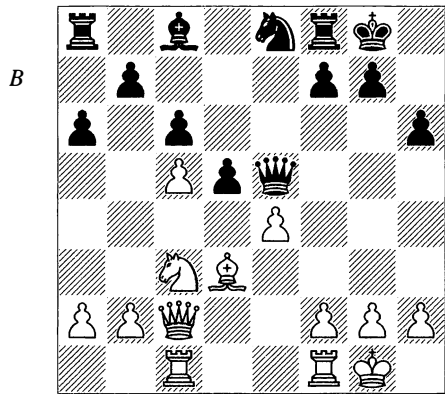
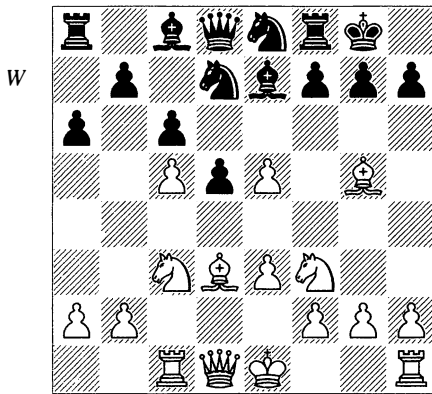
9...e5

This is Black's most principled continuation: he counters White's queenside space-grab with a central thrust.

10 dxe5 Qe8 (D)

The knight retreat is more prudent than 10...Qg4 11 Qf4 Qxc5 12 h3 Qxd3+ 13 Qxd3 Qh6 14 Qxh6 gxh6 15 0-0 f6 16 e4 with an advantage for White as Black's kingside pawn-cover has been weakened, Ribshtein-Kobrin, Givataim 2000.

11 Qxe7



White exchanges a set of bishops with the aim of capitalizing on Black's weakened dark squares. There are some sharp alternatives:

a) 11 ♖f4 ♜xc5 12 ♙b1 ♙g4 13 h3 ♙h5 14 g4?! (White has difficulty justifying this weakening of the kingside; the calm 14 0-0 looks safer) 14...♙g6 15 ♙f5 ♞b6! (this is more to the point than 15...♜c7 16 h4 with sharp play, Vaganian-Speelman, London 1984) 16 b3 ♜c7 with a comfortable position for Black as he has safely completed his development.

b) 11 h4!? ♜xc5 12 ♙b1 f6! (Black responds to White's flank advance with a central counter-attack) 13 ♞c2 g6 14 ♙h6 ♙f5 15 ♞e2 ♙xb1 16 ♞xb1 ♜g7 17 h5 g5! with a solid position for Black as White's kingside attack has been blunted, V.Popov-Ziatdinov, Voronezh 2004.

11...♞xe7 12 ♞c2 h6

Moving the h-pawn retains control over the f6-square and is preferable to 12...g6 (note that Black now has seven pawns on the same colour squares as his bishop) 13 e4 ♜xe5 14 ♜xe5 ♞xe5 15 0-0 dxe4 16 ♜xe4 ♙f5 (16...f5? 17 ♜g5 favours White because of Black's exposed king and inferior bishop, Rogozenko-Ciolac, Romanian Team Ch, Eforie Nord 2000) 17 ♞fe1 ♞d8 18 ♞e3 with a slight advantage for White; Black must untangle his kingside.

13 e4

White breaks open the centre to take advantage of Black's lagging development.

13...♜xe5 14 ♜xe5 ♞xe5 15 0-0 (D)

15...dxe4

The older line 15...♜f6 16 exd5 ♜g4, by which Black exploits White's lack of kingside

defenders, is worthy of consideration. For instance, 17 g3 ♞h5 18 h4 cxd5 19 ♞e2 ♙e6 with equal chances, Kotronias-Goldin, Sochi 1989.

16 ♜xe4 ♜f6

Nielsen seeks to exchange knights. Another idea is 16...♙f5 17 ♞fe1 ♙xe4? (17...♞d8!? is safer) 18 ♞xe4 ♞g5 19 h4 ♞f6 (so far this is Sundararajan-Thejkumar, Atul 2006) 20 ♞b4! with an advantage for White as Black has difficulty defending his b7-pawn.

17 ♞fe1 ♜xe4 18 ♞xe4 ♞c7 19 ♞ce1 ♙e6

The bishop emerges just in time to prevent White from occupying the seventh rank.

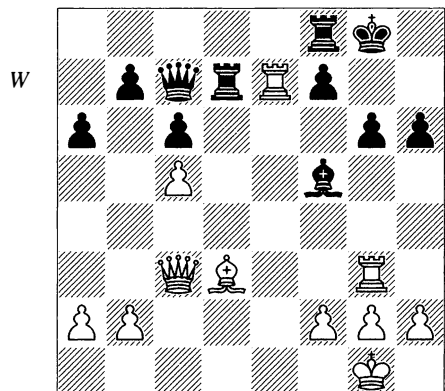
20 ♞c3

Topalov improves the position of his queen by shifting the lady to the a1-h8 diagonal.

20...♞ad8 21 ♞e3 ♙f5 22 ♞e7

Black is able to parry the attack after 22 ♙g3 f6 23 ♙c4+ ♙h8 24 ♞e1 ♞fe8 with equal chances.

22...♞d7 23 ♙g3 g6 (D)



24 ♖xd7 ♜xd7

Black must avoid 24...♙xd7?? 25 ♙xg6! fxg6 26 ♖xg6+ ♕f7 27 ♜g7+ ♕e8 28 ♜e6+ ♙xe6 29 ♜xc7, when White has a decisive material advantage.

25 ♜e3 ♙xd3 26 ♜xd3 ♜e6

Nielsen has defended well and now the game heads toward an inevitable draw.

27 a3 ♜e8 28 g3 h5 29 ♜d4 ♜h3 30 ♜d1 30 ♜e3 ♜xe3 31 ♜xe3 also draws.

30...♜f5 31 h4 ♜f3 32 ♜f1 ♜e2 33 ♜b4 ♜e7 34 ♜e1 1/2-1/2

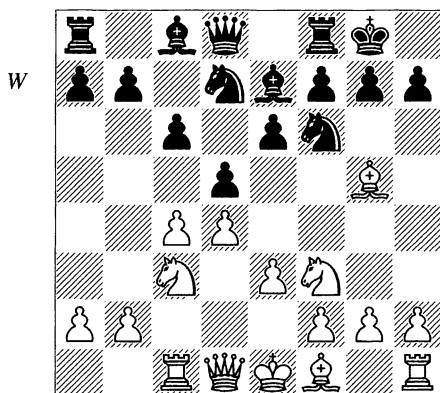
Game 24 [D67]

Suat Atalik – Viktor Zheliandinov

Podlehnik 2001

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 ♘bd7 7 ♜c1 c6 (D)

Other moves, including 7...a6, were covered in Game 23.



This is the main line of the Classical Defence. Black supports the d5-pawn and avoids any potential issues along the c-file. The popularity of this line among top-level players has declined from its heyday in the early part of the 20th century because the early piece exchanges make it difficult for Black to generate winning chances, but White must play accurately for many moves to have a chance of an opening advantage.

8 ♙d3

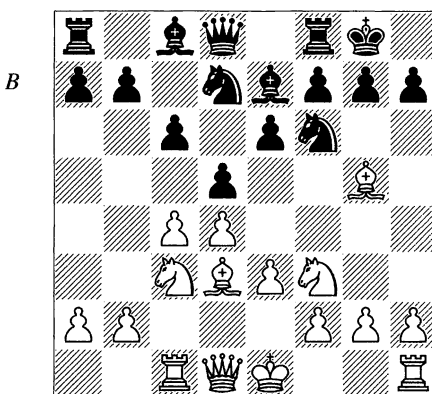
This is the classic QGD battle for the tempo: White now develops his light-squared bishop because although ...dxc4 would force White to lose a tempo recapturing the pawn, the natural ...c5 pawn-break would return the tempo because Black has already moved his c-pawn.

Alternatives:

a) 8 cxd5 (this leads to a version of the Exchange Variation that is rather harmless as White's rook does not belong on c1) 8...exd5 9 ♙d3 ♜e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 ♜c2 ♙e6 (11...a6 – 7...a6 8 cxd5!? exd5 9 ♙d3 c6 10 0-0 ♜e8 11 ♜c2 ♘f8; this position is discussed in note 'd' to White's 8th move in Game 23) 12 ♘e5 ♘d6 13 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 14 f4 f6 15 ♘f3 ♘b6 with equal chances, Al.Kharitonov-Kosyrev, Moscow 2005.

b) 8 ♜c2 a6 9 a3 (White delays the development of his light-squared bishop to save a tempo in the event that Black plays ...dxc4) 9...h6 10 ♙h4 ♜e8 11 ♙d3 dxc4 12 ♙xc4 b5 13 ♙e2 ♙b7 14 0-0 c5 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♜fd1 ♘cd7 with equal chances, M.Gurevich-Liogky, French Team Ch 2003.

We now return to the position after 8 ♙d3 (D):



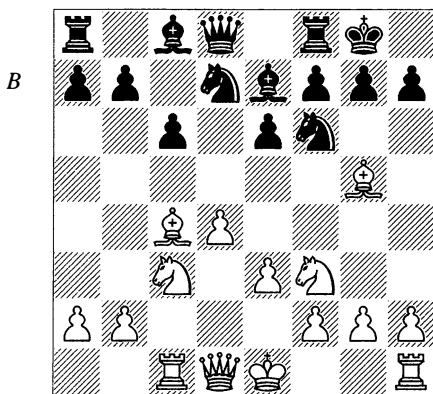
8...dxc4

Black can also play a line known as the Extended Fianchetto: 8...h6 9 ♖h4 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 b5 (the combination of ...h6 and ...♞d5 does not work as White is able to avoid the exchange of dark-squared bishops; thus 10...♞d5 is well met by 11 ♙g3! ♞xc3 12 bxc3 b6 13 0-0 ♙b7 14 ♚e2 ♞f6 15 ♞e5 c5 {I.Sokolov-Oll, Køge 1997} 16 ♚fd1, which favours White because of his strong pawn-centre) 11 ♙d3 a6 12 a4! (White must act quickly to disrupt Black's pawn-structure) and now:

a) 12...b4 13 ♞e4 (13 ♙xf6 gxf6 14 ♞e4 is a mistake since 14...f5 15 ♞g3 c5 16 e4 f4! gives Black strong counterplay, Malich-Zuidema, Siegen Olympiad 1970) 13...♞xe4 14 ♙xe7 ♞xf2 15 ♙xd8 ♞xd1 16 ♙xd1 ♚xd8 17 ♚xc6 ♙b7 18 ♚c7 with an advantage for White thanks to his active rook, Capablanca-Rossolimo, Paris 1938.

b) 12...bxa4 13 ♞xa4 ♚a5+ 14 ♞d2 ♙b4 15 ♞c3 c5 16 ♞b3 ♚d8 17 0-0 cxd4 18 ♞xd4 ♙b7 19 ♙e4! (White hopes to exploit Black's vulnerable queenside) 19...♚b8 20 ♞c6 ♙xc6 21 ♙xc6 ♚a7 22 ♙g3 with a slight advantage for White because of his powerful bishop-pair, Agzamov-T.Georgadze, Tashkent 1984, and several subsequent games.

9 ♙xc4 (D)



9...♞d5

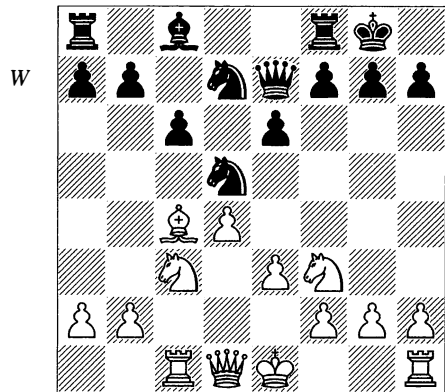
The knight centralization is sometimes referred to as 'Capablanca's equalizing manoeuvre'. Although the 3rd World Champion was not the first to play this idea, his adoption of the knight move was significant because he

was able to demonstrate a clear plan for activating Black's queenside pieces.

10 ♙xe7

White only succeeds in compromising his kingside after 10 h4?! f6 11 ♙f4 ♞xf4 12 exf4 ♞b6 13 ♙b3 ♞d5 14 g3 ♚e8 with an advantage for Black, Janowski-Capablanca, New York 1924.

10...♚xe7 (D)



11 ♞e4

The knight centralization was introduced into tournament play by the Belgian master Edgard Colle, and almost three years later the knight move was featured in the 1927 World Championship match between Alekhine and Capablanca. Alekhine directed the white pieces in each of these encounters and he obtained several crushing positions, but all eight games ended in draws.

11 0-0 is the subject of Game 25.

11...♞5f6

The knight retreat is the most popular method of displacing White's centralized knight. Alternatives:

a) 11...♚b4+ 12 ♚d2 ♚xd2+ 13 ♙xd2 (the exchange of queens has simplified the position, but White has an edge because it is difficult for Black to achieve the ...c5 or ...e5 pawn-breaks) 13...♚d8 14 ♚hd1 ♞5f6 15 ♞xf6+ ♞xf6 16 ♙b3 ♙f8 17 ♙e2 with a slight space advantage for White, Alekhine-Capablanca, World Ch match (game 6), Buenos Aires 1927.

b) 11...e5 12 dxex5 ♞xe5 13 ♞xe5 ♚xe5 14 ♙xd5 cxd5 15 ♞c3 ♚d8 16 ♚d4 ♚g5! with a

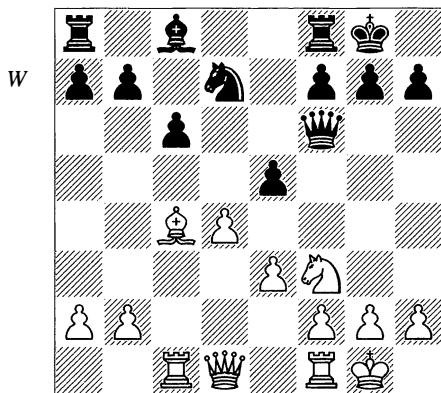
balanced game, Bolbochan-Guimard, Buenos Aires 1935, and several subsequent games. Black retains the queens on the board so as to generate pressure on White's kingside.

c) 11...b6 (this is Black's most promising move if he is seeking to unbalance the position) 12 0-0 ♖b7 13 ♘g3 (13 ♘e5!? ♜fd8 14 ♜e2 ♜ac8 15 f4 {Cifuentes-Vega Holm, Dos Hermanas 2001} 15...c5 16 ♖b5 ♘7f6 with equal chances as Black has successfully activated his light-squared bishop) 13...c5 14 e4 ♘f4! (a strong square for the knight) 15 ♖b5 ♜fd8 16 ♜a4 ♘f6 17 e5 ♘6d5 with equal chances, Portisch-Ljubojević, Milan 1975.

12 ♘xf6+

The alternative is 12 ♘g3 (the motivation behind the knight retreat is to clear a path for White's e-pawn) 12...e5 13 0-0 exd4 14 ♘f5 ♜d8 15 ♘5xd4 (15 ♘3xd4 ♘e5 16 ♖b3 ♖xf5 17 ♘xf5 g6 18 ♘d4 ♜e7 with an even game, Lilienthal-Renter, Pärnu 1947) 15...♘b6 16 ♖d3 ♜e7 with equal chances, Topalov-Yermolinsky, Erevan Olympiad 1996.

12...♜xf6 13 0-0 e5 (D)



14 e4

White aims for a slightly advantageous endgame. Alternatives:

a) 14 d5 e4! 15 dxc6 bxc6 (after 15...exf3?? 16 cxd7 fxg2 17 ♜e1 White wins a piece) 16 ♘d2 ♜g6 17 f4 ♘f6 with a balanced game, Ivanchuk-Asrian, European Ch, Antalya 2004.

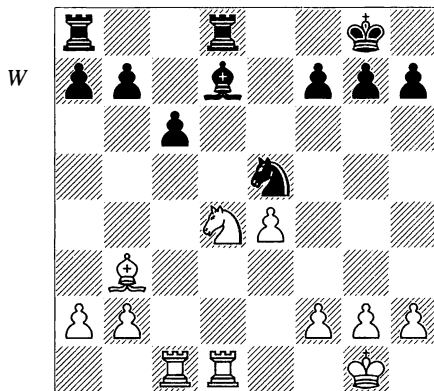
b) 14 ♖b3 exd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 (15...♜e7!? is an untried suggestion of Matthew Sadler; then perhaps White can exploit the open d-file

by 16 ♜fd1 ♘f6 17 ♜d6 ♜xd6 18 ♜xd6 with a slight endgame edge) 16 ♘xd4 ♘f6 17 f3 ♖d7 18 e4 with a slight advantage for White because of his more active minor pieces combined with his mobile pawn-majority, Hertneck-Hübner, Garmisch-Partenkirchen 1994.

14...exd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘e5?

Zheliandinov is following established theory, but this move is the decisive mistake because the knight is a juicy target for White's f-pawn. A safer move is 16...♘b6 17 ♖b3 a5 18 a3 (18 a4!? looks reasonable, to prevent Black from activating his queen's rook) 18...a4 19 ♖a2 ♜e8 20 ♜fe1 ♜a5 21 f4 with a slight advantage for White, Atalik-Glienke, Dresden 2005.

17 ♖b3 ♜d8 18 ♜fd1 ♖d7 (D)



19 f4!

Atalik improves over 19 ♜c5 ♘g6 20 ♜c2 ♘f8 21 f3 ♖e8 22 ♖f2 with a slight advantage for White, Petrosian-Portisch, Santa Monica 1966. I suppose White should be able to come up with something new after 35 years!

19...♘g6 20 f5 ♘e5 21 ♜c5! ♘g4

The idea behind the f-pawn advance is revealed in the variation 21...♜e8 22 ♘e6! ♖xe6 23 fxe6 f6 24 ♜xe5! fxe5 25 e7+ ♖h8 26 ♜d7 with a crushing advantage – White will emerge with a won rook ending.

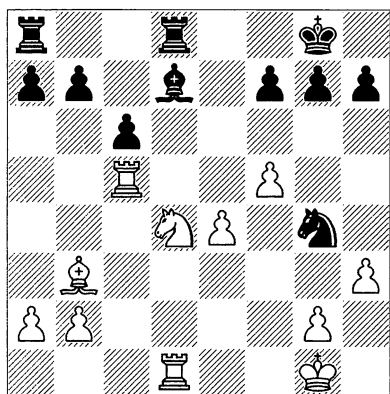
22 h3 (D)

22...b6?

Black overlooks a tactical idea, but other moves are also hopeless:

a) 22...♘h6 23 g4 ♖f8 24 g5 ♘g8 25 e5 b6 26 ♘xc6! bxc5 27 ♘xd8 ♜xd8 28 e6 leads to a

B



decisive advantage for White according to Atalik's analysis.

b) 22...dxf6 23 e5 dxe4 24 Bcc1 d3 25 e6 Bxe6 26 fxe6! Bxd4 27 f2 d4+ 28 e3 Bxd1 29 Bxd1 (29 exf7+ f8 30 Bxd1 is equivalent) 29...dxf6 30 exf7+ f8 31 f4 with a clear advantage for White – Atalik.

Both of these lines illustrate the tremendous power of a mobile pawn-majority; Black is simply pushed off the board by a relentless wave of angry pawns.

23 dxc6! Bxc6

No relief is offered by 23...bxc5 24 dxd8 Bxd8 25 hxg4 and White mops up.

24 Bxd8+ Bxd8 25 Bxc6 1-0

After 25...dxe5 26 Bc7 f8 27 Bxa7 White has a decisive material advantage. A smooth performance by the Turkish GM Suat Atalik.

Game 25 [D68]

Alexandre Lesiège – Vahagn Voskanian

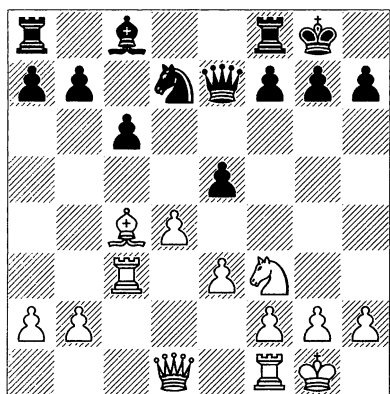
Montreal 2003

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Bc3 f6 4 g5 e7 5 e3 0-0 6 f3 b7 7 Bc1 c6 8 d3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 d5 10 Bxe7 Bxe7 11 0-0

11 dxe4 was covered in Game 24.

11...dxc3 12 Bxc3 e5 (D)

W



13 Bb3

White avoids committing his queen until the central pawn-structure has been stabilized. The prophylactic bishop retreat is White's most dangerous attacking idea; let's briefly review the alternatives to see why:

a) 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 dxe5 Bxe5 – 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 dxe5 Bxe5.

b) Miguel Najdorf had great success with 13 Bb1:

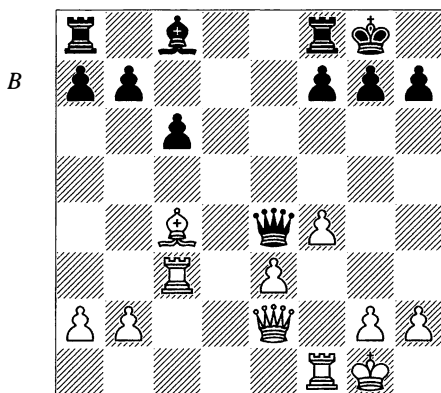
b1) The idea behind White's queen move is revealed after 13...e4 14 d2 d6 15 b4 (White launches the minority attack) 15...a6 16 Bc1 g4 (16...d8!?) 17 a4 with a queenside initiative, Najdorf-Sanguinetti, Mar del Plata 1945.

b2) 13...exd4 14 exd4 b6 15 Bb3 Bf6 16 Bc3 g4 17 Bc4 Bxf3 18 Bxf3 Bae8 with equal chances, Ståhlberg-Gligorić, match (game 6), Belgrade/Split 1949.

c) 13 Bc2 (Svetozar Gligorić was partial to this move) 13...exd4 (13...e4 14 d2 d6 15 Bc1 g4 16 b4! favours White, Vidmar-Fine, Warsaw Olympiad 1935) 14 exd4 b6 15 Bc3 Bd8 16 Bb3 d5 (Black blocks the dangerous a2-g8 diagonal) 17 Bc5 f6 18 Bxd5+ cxd5 19 Bc3 g4 20 Bb3 Bxf3 21 Bxf3 Bb7 with equal chances, Lechtynsky-Prandstetter, Trenčianske Teplice 1985.

d) 13 dxe5 (this is White's most popular choice; my database contains over 500 games with this variation, so what follows is a brief examination of the main line) 13...dxe5 14

♞xe5 ♜xe5 15 f4 (this thrust is known as the Rubinstein Attack; White utilizes his slight development advantage to mobilize his kingside pawn-majority) 15...♜e4 (Black temporarily blockades White's e-pawn; a good example of the latent power in White's position is seen after 15...♜e7? 16 f5! b5 17 ♖b3 b4 18 f6! gxf6 19 ♙xc6 ♜xe3+ 20 ♖h1 ♖b7 21 ♙cxf6 with a strong attack, Euwe-Thomas, Hastings 1934/5) 16 ♜e2 (D).



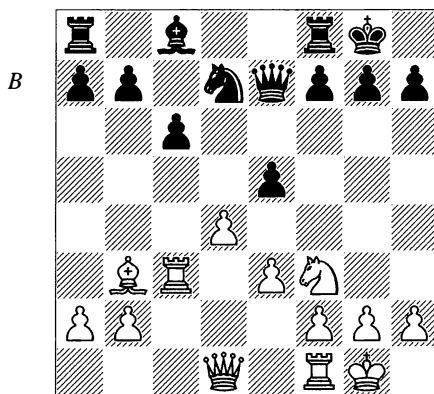
White protects his e-pawn in preparation for driving the black queen away from the e4-square. Now Black must make an important decision:

d1) 16...♖f5 (Black develops a piece, but White can gain time and force a favourable end-game by attacking the bishop) 17 ♖d3 ♜d5 18 e4 ♜d4+ 19 ♜f2 (19 ♖h1 ♜fe8 20 ♙c4 ♜d7 21 ♜c2 ♖e6 22 ♙c3 f6 with equal chances, Adler-Bossuyt, Antwerp 1992) 19...♜xf2+ 20 ♖xf2 ♖d7 21 ♙d1 ♜fd8 22 ♖c4 (22 ♖e3!?) 22...♖e8 23 ♙cd3! (White seizes the d-file; ECO only considers 23 ♙xd8 ♖xd8 24 ♙d3 1/2-1/2 Franco-Campora, Ponferrada 1992) 23...♙xd3 24 ♙xd3 b5 25 ♖b3 ♖f8 26 e5 c5 is equal according to Janjgava, but Palliser suggests the logical 27 ♙d6 ♖e7 28 ♖e3 ♙d8 29 ♙a6 with an advantage for White.

d2) 16...♙d8!? (this sensible move deserves more attention) 17 ♖b3 ♖e6 18 ♖c2 ♜b4 19 a3 ♜b6 20 f5!? (20 ♖d3 ♙e8 with equal chances, Partos-Plessec, Swiss Team Ch 2001) 20...♜xb2 21 fxe6 ♜xc3 22 ♖xh7+ (White forces a perpetual check as 22 exf7+ ♖f8 defends) 22...♖xh7

23 ♜h5+ ♖g8 24 ♜xf7+ ♖h7 1/2-1/2 Garcia Gonzales-J.Hernandez, Cienfuegos 1985; this line could use more practical tests.

We now return to 13 ♖b3 (D):



13...exd4

Black can keep the centre closed with 13...e4 14 ♖d2 ♖f6 15 ♙c5 ♖g4 16 ♜b1 ♖d7 17 ♙c3 ♖e2 18 ♙fc1! (the rook works well on the c-file; 18 ♙e1 ♖d3 19 ♖c2 ♖xc2 20 ♜xc2 ♙fe8 is only equal) 18...♖d3 19 ♖c2 ♖xc2 20 ♜xc2 ♙fe8 21 b4!? and White is a little better in view of his queenside chances, Tallaksen-Aarland, Gausdal 2005. If this line looks familiar, it is because we have transposed into a position that can also be reached from the Lasker Defence with the small difference that here Black's pawn is on h7 instead of h6; see note 'a2' to Black's 12th move in Game 18.

14 exd4

White voluntarily accepts an isolated d4-pawn because he will be able to use his superior development to create kingside threats. Note that Black's queenside is still undeveloped.

14...♖f6

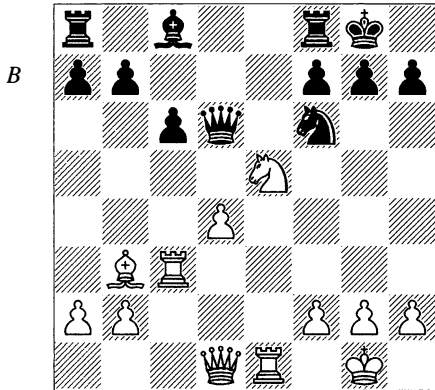
Black adds a kingside defender and prepares to develop his light-squared bishop.

15 ♙e1 ♜d6 16 ♖e5! (D)

The knight-leap is White's most energetic continuation. Alternatives:

a) 16 ♙ce3 ♖g4 17 h3 ♖xf3 18 ♙xf3 ♙ad8 with equal chances, Kahn-Maderna, Warsaw Olympiad 1935. Black has reduced White's attacking chances by exchanging his light-squared bishop for the white knight.

b) 16 h3 ♕f5 17 ♖ce3 ♜ae8 18 ♜e5 ♕g6 19 a3 ♜d8 20 ♜xe8 ♝xe8 21 ♜d2 and a draw was agreed in Kramnik-Deep Fritz, match (game 8), Manama 2002.



16...♞d5

Black closes the dangerous a2-g8 diagonal. The alternative is to oppose the white bishop with 16...♜e6 17 ♕xe6 fxe6 (now both sides have an isolated pawn, but White's active rook enables him to create kingside threats) 18 ♜b3 ♞d5 19 ♜g3 and now:

a) 19...b6 20 ♜e4 led to an instructive finish after 20...♜ac8? (relatively best is 20...♜f6 21 ♜c2 with strong kingside pressure) 21 ♜xg7+! ♜xg7 (21...♜h8 22 ♜xh7+ mates) 22 ♜g3+ ♜f6 (22...♜h8 23 ♞g6+ hxxg6 24 ♜xd6 and White wins) 23 ♜h4+ ♜f5 (23...♜g7 24 ♜g4+ ♜h8 25 ♜h6 is again winning for White) 24 ♜xh7+ ♜f6 25 ♞g4+ 1-0 Gomez Esteban-Alvarez Ibarra, Vitoria 2003. This game provides a great example of the power of a knight outpost on the e5-square.

b) 19...♜e7 20 ♞d3 ♜ae8 21 ♜g4 favours White because of his more active rooks, Kach-eishvili-T.A.Petrosian, Batumi 2003.

17 ♜g3 ♕f5

Alternatives:

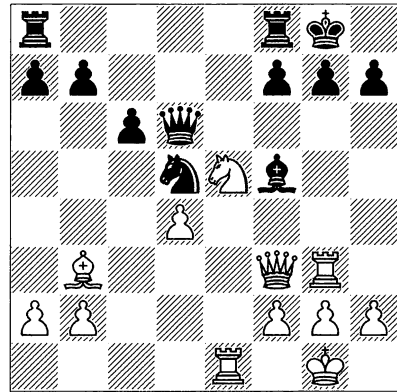
a) 17...♜e6 18 ♜h5 – 17...♕f5 18 ♜f3 ♜e6? 19 ♜h5?.

b) 17...f6 18 ♞c4 ♜c7 19 ♜h5 with a strong attack as Black has difficulty completing his development.

18 ♜f3 (D)

18...♕e6?

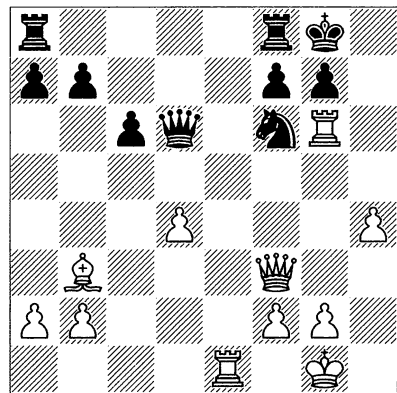
B



Black's position is already quite difficult, and his only chance is to continue guarding the kingside with 18...♕g6 19 h4! ♞f6, and now:

a) 20 ♞xg6 hxxg6 21 ♜xg6 (D) and then:

B



a1) 21...♜xd4? 22 ♜g3 ♞d5 23 ♜g4! (this is a major improvement over 23 ♜g5? ♜ae8 with chances for survival, Di Caro-Brunello, Italian Junior Ch, Bratto 2003) 23...♜f6 (23...♜xb2 24 ♜e5 ♜b1+ 25 ♜h2 ♜h7 26 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 27 ♜g5 and White wins) 24 ♜e5! with the idea of ♜eg5 gives White a decisive kingside attack.

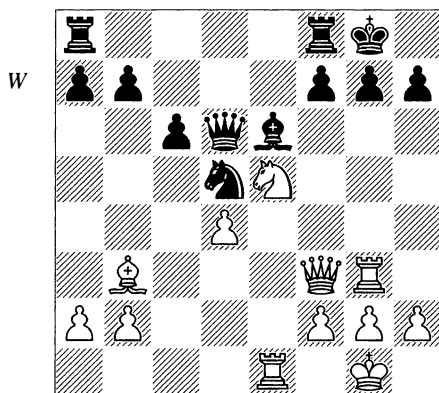
a2) 21...♜fe8 22 ♞d1 ♜f8 23 ♜g4 ♜e7 24 ♜f4 ♜ae8 25 g3 and Black has insufficient compensation for the missing pawn.

b) 20 ♜g5! ♞d5 (20...♜ae8 21 h5 ♞xh5 22 ♜xh5 ♜xh5 23 ♜xh5 favours White) and here:

b1) 21 h5!? (a speculative idea) 21...f6 22 ♜xg6 hxxg6 23 hxxg6 fxe5 24 ♜h5 gives White a strong attack in return for the sacrificed rook.

b2) 21 ♖xg6 (simple and strong) 21...hxg6 (or 21...fxg6 22 ♔xd5+ cxd5 23 ♚xd5+ ♚xd5 24 ♚xd5 ♚ad8 25 ♚xd8 ♚xd8 26 ♔e4 with an extra pawn in the rook endgame) 22 ♔xd5 cxd5 23 ♚xd5 and White has a clear extra pawn.

We now return to 18...♔e6? (D):



19 ♚h5?

White can secure a winning advantage with 19 ♔xd5!. The variations are long but fairly straightforward:

a) 19...cxd5 20 ♚f6 g6 21 ♖g4! h5 22 ♖h6+ ♖h7 23 ♖f5! (too many pins!) 23...♔xf5 24 ♚xd6 and White wins.

b) 19...♔xd5 20 ♚xg7+! ♖h8 (20...♖xg7 21 ♚g3+ wins the black queen) 21 ♚xh7+ ♖xh7 (21...♖g8 loses to 22 ♚h5 ♚f6 23 ♚e3) 22 ♚f5+ ♖h8 23 ♚h5+ ♖g7 24 ♚g5+ ♖h7 25 ♚e3 (White has shed a rook, but Black must give up his queen to prevent mate) 25...♚h6 26 ♚f5+ ♖g7 27 ♚g3+ ♖h8 28 ♚h3 ♚xh3 29 ♚xh3+ ♖g7 (Black has two rooks for the queen, but White's team of queen and knight proves deadly) 30 ♚g3+ ♖h6 31 ♚h4+ ♖g7 32 ♚g5+ ♖h7 33 ♖d7 and White wins.

c) 19...♚xd5 20 ♚f6 g6 21 ♖xg6 fxg6 (the alternative 21...hxg6 loses to 22 ♚e5) 22 ♚xg6+! hxg6 23 ♚xg6+ ♖h8 24 ♚h6+ ♖g8 25 ♚xe6 and White has a decisive attack; for example, 25...♚xd4 (25...♚xe6 26 ♚xe6+ ♚f7 27 f4 and White wins) 26 ♚g6+ ♖f7 27 ♚h7+ ♖e8 28 ♚e6+ ♖d8 29 ♚e7+ ♖c8 30 ♚xf8+ ♖c7 31 ♚e7+ ♖b6 32 ♚e4 ♚d1+ 33 ♚e1 and White has emerged from the complications with two extra pawns.

The above variations demonstrate how well a queen and knight cooperate together in weaving a mating-net.

19...♚d8?

Voskanian overlooks the threat. Black must counter-attack by 19...♚b4! 20 ♚e4 ♚d2 (Black is able to slow down White's attack by creating back-rank mating threats) 21 ♖d3 ♖f6 22 ♚e5 ♚h6 23 ♚f4 ♖d7 24 ♚c7 ♔xb3 25 axb3 ♖f6 with roughly equal chances.

20 ♔xd5!

Lesiège seizes the opportunity to finish the game.

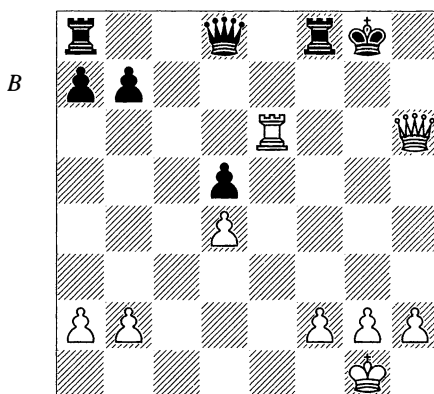
20...cxd5

Or:

a) 20...♔xd5 (the bishop loses control over the critical h3-square, giving White a forced win) 21 ♚h6 g6 22 ♚h3 ♚e8 23 ♚xh7+ ♖f8 24 ♖d7+ ♚xd7 25 ♚h8#.

b) 20...♚xd5 21 ♚h6 g6 22 ♖xg6! hxg6 23 ♚xg6+ fxg6 24 ♚xg6+ ♖h8 25 ♚h6+ ♖g8 26 ♚xe6 and White has a decisive attack. Note that we have transposed into note 'c' to White's 19th move above with each side having played one additional move.

21 ♚h6 g6 22 ♖xg6! fxg6 23 ♚xg6+ hxg6 24 ♚xg6+ ♖h8 25 ♚h6+ ♖g8 26 ♚xe6 (D)



1-0

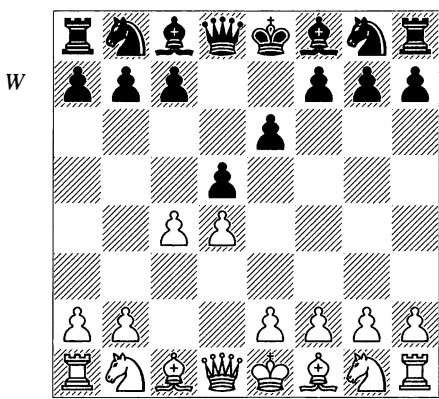
The black king is hopelessly exposed. The finish would be 26...♚d7 27 ♚g6+ ♖f7 28 ♚g7+ ♖e8 29 ♚e3+ ♖d8 30 ♚g5+ ♖c7 31 ♚xd7+ ♖xd7 32 ♚xd5+ ♖c7 33 h4 and White wins as the queen and pawns are too much for the black rooks.

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1 d4 d5
2 c4 e6 10

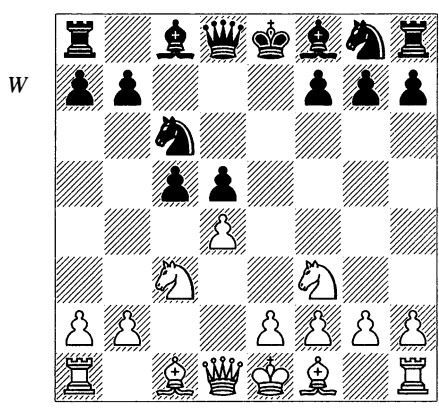


3 dxc3

3 cxd5 36
3 dxf3:
a) 3...c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 dxc3 21
b) For 3...dxf6 4 dxc3, see Line C

Now (after 3 dxc3):
A: Alternatives to 3...dxf6
B: 3...dxf6 4 cxd5
C: 3...dxf6 4 dxf3
D: 3...dxf6 4 g5

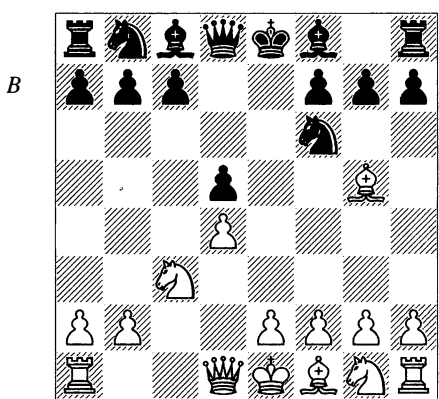
A)
3 ... c5 20
Or 3...g5 10:
a) 4 dxf3 dxf6 46
b) 4 cxd5 exd5 5 g4 c6 10:
b1) 6 c2 10
b2) 6 e3 14
4 cxd5
4 dxf3 dxc6 5 e3 dxf6 73
4 ... exd5
4...cxd4 20
5 dxf3 dxc6 21



6 e3 21
6 g3 24
6 ... dxf6
7 g2 ge7
8 0-0 0-0 25

Now:
9 dxc5 25
9 g5 30

B)
3 ... dxf6 36
4 cxd5 exd5 36
5 g5 37



5 ... c6
6 e3 ♖bd7
7 ♙d3 ♙e7 38
8 ♚c2 0-0 39

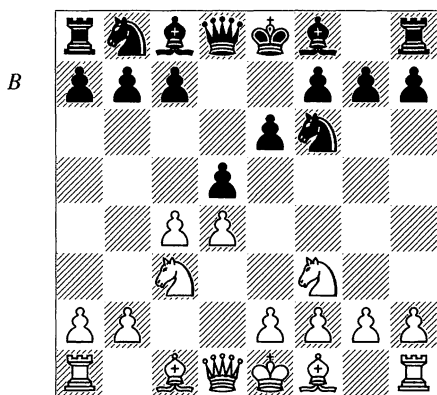
Now:

9 ♘ge2 39

9 ♘f3 42

C)

3 ... ♘f6
4 ♘f3 46



4 ... ♙b4 58

Or:

a) 4...dxc4 58

b) 4...♙e7 46:

b1) 5 ♙g5 0-0 6 e3 - 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0
6 ♘f3

b2) 5 ♙f4 46 5...0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♙xc5 47:

b21) 8 cxd5 47

b22) 8 ♚c2 50

c) 4...c5 73:

c1) 5 e3 73

c2) 5 cxd5 76 5...♘xd5:

c21) 6 g3 76

c22) 6 e4 78

5 cxd5

5 ♙g5 67 5...dxc4 6 e4 67

5 ...

exd5

6 ♙g5 59

Now:

6...h6 59

6...♘bd7 63

D)

3 ... ♘f6

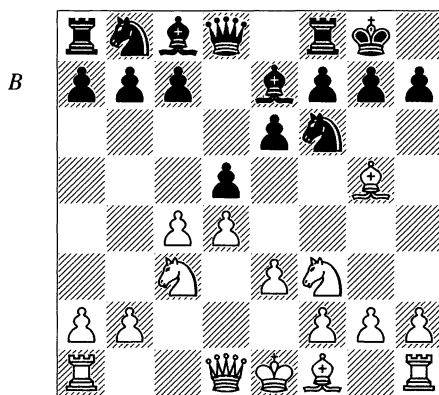
4 ♙g5 84

4 ... ♙e7 88

4...♘bd7 84 5 ♘f3 c6 6 e3 ♚a5 84

5 e3 0-0

6 ♘f3 88



6 ... h6 88

6...♘bd7 110:

a) 7 ♚c2 110

b) 7 ♚c1 114:

b1) 7...a6 114

b2) 7...c6 118 8 ♙d3 dxc4 9 ♙xc4 ♘d5

10 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 119:

b21) 11 ♘e4 119

b22) 11 0-0 121

7 ♙h4 91

7 ♙xf6 88

7 ... b6 97

7...♘e4 91

Now (after 7...b6):

8 ♙d3 97

8 ♙e2 101

8 cxd5 105

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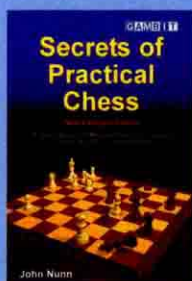
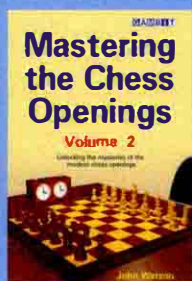
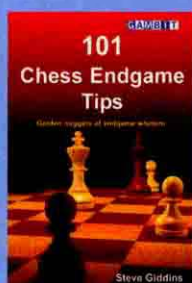
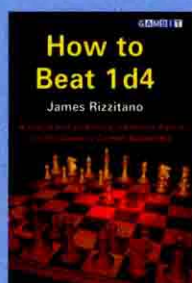
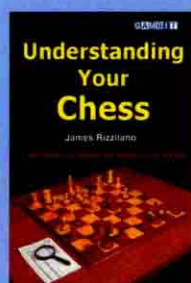
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